This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

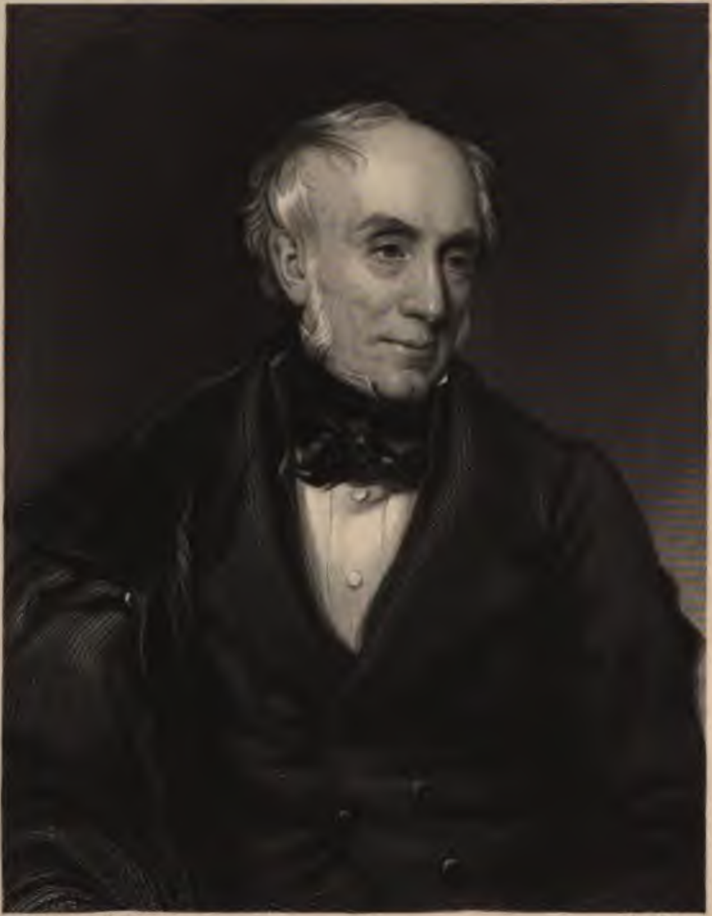
+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

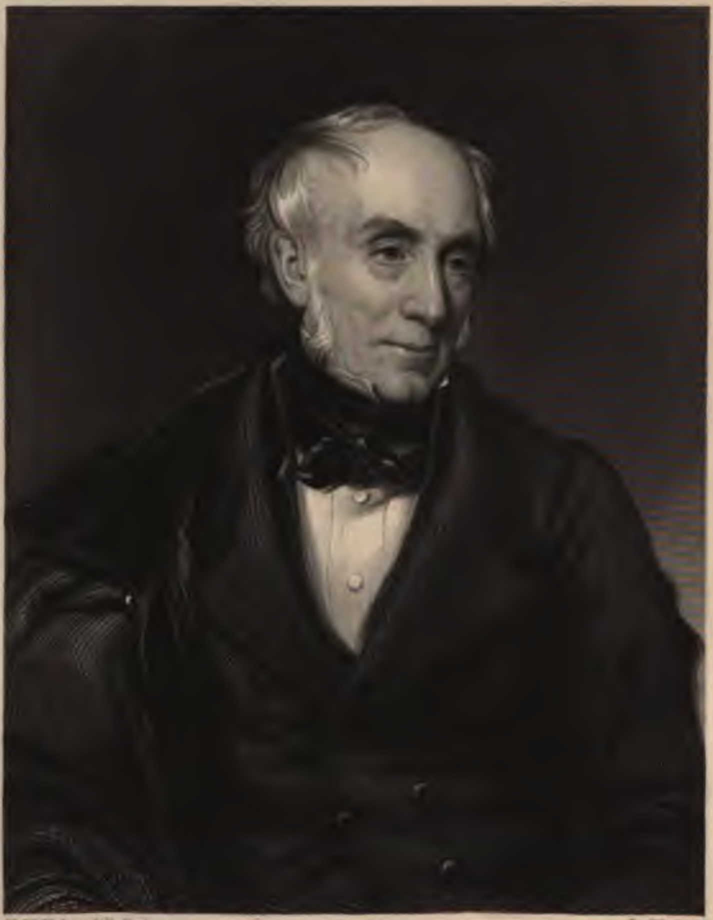
STANFORD UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES



H. W. Pickersgill, R.A. J. Skelton

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

LONDON, EDWARD MOXON, DOVER STREET, 1851.



H. W. Pickersgill R.A.

MEMOIRS

OF

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH,

POET-LAUREATE, D.C.L.

BY

CHRISTOPHER WORDSWORTH, D.D.

CANON OF WESTMINSTER.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
EDWARD MOXON, DOVER STREET.
1851.

369673

PREFACE.

THE design of the present work being described in the Introductory Chapter, I have here only to discharge the agreeable duty of tendering my acknowledgments to those persons who have honoured me with their friendly aid in its composition. My revered and beloved aunt, and the other members of Mr. Wordsworth's family, and his executors[1], will, I trust, accept my best thanks for the readiness with which they have complied with his wishes, in affording me free access to his papers. I have also to express my thankfulness for the unreserved kindness with which the valuable manuscript, mentioned in page 22., has been communicated for my use. To the writer of that MS., and to its present possessor EDWARD QUILLINAN, Esq., Mr. Wordsworth's son-in-law, my special thanks are due, not only for their

---

[1] The executors are Mr. W. STRICKLAND COOKSON, of Lincoln's Inn; Mr. W. WORDSWORTH, of Carlisle; and Mr. JOHN CARTER, of Rydal.

CONTENTS

OF

THE FIRST VOLUME.

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER - - - - Page 1

CHAPTER II.

Autobiographical Memoranda dictated by William Wordsworth, P. L., at Rydal Mount, November, 1847 - - - 7

CHAPTER III.

Rydal Mount - - - - - - 18

CHAPTER IV.

Birth and Parentage of William Wordsworth - - - 29

CHAPTER V.

School-time - - - - - - 36

CHAPTER VI.

College Life - - - - - - 45

CHAPTER VII.

College Vacations - - - - - - 52

CHAPTER VIII.

Residence in France - - - - - 70

CHAPTER IX.

Feelings and Opinions on returning from France to England.—Choice of Profession - - - - Page 78

CHAPTER X.

Racedown - - - - - - - 94

CHAPTER XI.

Alfoxden - - - - - - - 102

CHAPTER XII.

The Tragedy - - - - - - 113

CHAPTER XIII.

The "Lyrical Ballads" - - - - - 121

CHAPTER XIV.

Residence in Germany - - - - - 128

CHAPTER XV.

Return towards England.—Commencement of "The Prelude." 142

CHAPTER XVI.

Settlement at Grasmere - - - - - 146

CHAPTER XVII.

Second Volume of "Lyrical Ballads" - - - 159

CHAPTER XVIII.

Residence at Grasmere.—Short Visit to France - Page 176

CHAPTER XIX.

Marriage - - - - - - - 201

CHAPTER XX.

Tour in Scotland - - - - - - 207

CHAPTER XXI.

Sir George H. Beaumont, Bart. - - - - 258

CHAPTER XXII.

Captain Wordsworth - - - - - 281

CHAPTER XXIII.

Continuation of "The Prelude, or Growth of a Poet's Mind" 302

CHAPTER XXIV.

Other Poems written in 1805 and 1806 - - - 314

CHAPTER XXV.

"Poems in Two Volumes," published in 1807. Unpopularity 326

CHAPTER XXVI.

Mr. Wordsworth at Coleorton - - - - 344

CHAPTER XXVII.

His Children - - - - - - 367

CHAPTER XXVIII.

" Convention of Cintra " - - - - Page 382

CHAPTER XXIX.

Advice to the Young - - - - - 422

CHAPTER XXX.

Essay on Epitaphs - - - - - 434

CHAPTER XXXI.

Description of the Scenery of the Lakes.—Sonnets and Letters on the projected Windermere Railway - - - 446

MEMOIRS

OF

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

In the autumn of the year 1847, when the author of this Memoir was on a visit at Rydal Mount, the conversation turned on the Biography of departed poets — a subject which has been handled by Mr. Wordsworth in his Letter to a Friend of Robert Burns, published in the year 1816.[1]

It was to be expected that this topic would not be dismissed without some reference to himself. Whether *any*, and — *if* any — *what kind* of memorial should be given to the world of his life — this was a question which often presented itself to the mind of his nearest friends, as doubtless it did to his own.

On that occasion, as on many others, he expressed an opinion, that a poet's *Life* is written in his WORKS; and this is undoubtedly true, in a remarkable manner, in his own particular case.

---

[1] London, Longmans, pp. 37. It is dated Rydal Mount, January, 1816.

His life had not been a stirring one. It had been passed, for the most part, amid natural scenes of quiet beauty; and what Horace has said of the poet Lucilius was very applicable to him. He confided his secrets to his lyre[1]; to it he communicated his feelings and his thoughts on every occasion of interest, public and private; and hence his LIFE is written in his WORKS.

Nor is this all. One Poem, especially — that which has been given to the world subsequently to his death — the PRELUDE, — is designed to exhibit the growth of his mind from his infancy to the year 1799, when, if we may so speak, he entered upon his mission and ministry, and deliberately resolved to devote his time and faculties to the art and office of a POET.

His Works, therefore, are his Life. And it would be a superfluous and presumptuous enterprise to encroach upon this their province, and to invade the biographical eminence on which his Poems stand. Let them retain their supremacy in this respect; and let no other LIFE of WORDSWORTH be composed beside what has thus been written with his own hand.

This being borne in mind, it ensues as a matter of course, that the present Work does not claim for itself the title of a Life of Wordsworth. Nor, again, does it profess to offer a critical review of his Poems; or to supply an elaborate exposition of the principles on which those Poems were composed. Mr. Wordsworth had no desire that any such disquisition should be written. He wished that his Poems should stand by themselves, and plead their own cause before the tribunal of Posterity.

---

[1] "Ille velut *fidis* arcana *sodalibus* olim
Credebat *libris;* neque, si malè cesserat, usquam
Decurrens aliò, neque si benè; quo fit ut omnis
Votivâ pateat veluti descripta tabellâ
VITA senis."

HORAT. *Satir.* II. i. 30.

The character of the present work is a humbler one. Regarding the Poems as his Life, the author of these volumes considers it to be his duty to endeavour to supply materials, subordinate and ministerial to the Poems, and illustrative of them; in a word, to write a biographical commentary on the Poet's works.

This, the writer believes, is no unimportant task, for the following reasons:—

First, Mr. Wordsworth's Poems are no visionary dreams, but practical realities. He wrote as he lived, and he lived as he wrote. His poetry had its heart in his life, and his life found a voice in his poetry.[1]

It is very necessary that Posterity should be assured of this, in order that it may have a firmer faith in his principles. And no such guarantee can be given of his sincerity in enunciating those principles, and no such evidence can be afforded of their results, as is supplied by the records of his life.

---

[1] The following is the testimony of one who had the best opportunities and qualifications for judging on this subject. Mr. Southey, writing to his friend Bernard Barton from Keswick, Dec. 19. 1814, thus speaks:—"Wordsworth's residence and mine are fifteen miles asunder; a sufficient distance to preclude any frequent interchange of visits. I have known him nearly twenty years, and, for about half that time, intimately. The strength and the character of his mind you see in the EXCURSION; and his *Life does not belie his Writings;* for, in *every relation of life*, and *every point of view*, he is a truly exemplary and admirable man. In conversation he is powerful beyond any of his contemporaries; and, as a poet—I speak not from the partiality of friendship, nor because we have been so absurdly held up as both writing upon one concerted system of poetry, but with the most deliberate exercise of impartial judgment whereof I am capable, when I declare my full conviction that Posterity will rank him with Milton."—SOUTHEY'S *Life and Correspondence*, iv. 91.

Besides; it is obvious to the most cursory reader of his works, that they are in a great measure derived from materials personal to himself. His writings have in a remarkable degree a subjective character. The scenes in which he lived, the incidents of his own life and of his friends, supplied topics for his genius to elaborate. Hence it is evident that many of his poems will be very obscure to those persons who are not acquainted with the circumstances of his life, and they will be perused with greater pleasure and profit by all who are conversant with his history.

Next it may be affirmed, that his poems to be studied profitably should be read chronologically. Dr. Bentley[1] has well observed of Horace, that no one can form a right estimate of *his* moral character, who does not pay careful attention to the periods in which that poet's works were respectively composed.

> "Lenior et melior fis accedente senectâ?"[2]
>
> "Dost thou become more sage,
> Milder and mellower, with declining age?"

was a question which Horace habitually asked himself, as his works show. And so it was with Wordsworth. It is true, "the child was father of the man,"[3] and there is a continuous stream of identity flowing from his earliest to his latest poems. But the *progress* of the stream brought with it a certain change. A greater fulness and depth, a stronger and steadier current, was the result. Or, to use another illustration, — time, experience, foreign travel, domestic affliction, even the severity and harsh treatment which he received from some of his critics, all these imparted a soft and mellow tone to his mind, as the winds and rains of autumn do to his own woods and rocks. Hence there was a gradual development, a more definite delineation, a brighter and more heavenly colouring in certain parts of his system, as he advanced in years, and drew nearer to the close of his career.

---

[1] Præfat. in Horatii Opera, ed. Amst., 1728.

[2] Horat. Ep. ii. 2. *ad fin.*

[3] Vol. i. p. 147.

"The childhood shows the man
As morning shows the day."
Par. Reg. iv. 220.

Hence also it is clear, that it is very unjust and erroneous to cite any one poem, or a few lines, composed in his earlier years, as a deliberate expression of his maturer judgment. His Works must be taken as a whole. They must be read with habitual reference to the time in which they were composed. And in order that this may be done with ease, a biographical manual, designed to illustrate the poems, ought to exist; and this is what the present publication proposes to supply.

For himself, let the writer of these Memoirs be now permitted to avow, that he would not, of his own accord, have ventured on this task. Different duties, of a professional nature, were pressing upon him, which left him little leisure for other occupations. But a choice did not seem to be open to him. His revered Uncle, on the occasion to which allusion has already been made, was pleased to express a desire, and to commit that expression of his desire to writing, that he would prepare for publication any personal notices that might be thought requisite for the illustration of his Poems; and he afterwards dictated another document, intimating his hope that his surviving relatives and intimate friends would supply any materials in their possession that might be regarded as serviceable for this design.

He could not, therefore, decline it; and having undertaken it, he can now only express a hope, that the subject may not have suffered by being committed to his hands. Having engaged to perform the labour assigned to him, he requested Mr. Wordsworth to favour him with a brief sketch of the most prominent circumstances in his life. Accordingly he did so. On the occasion of the same visit he dictated the autobiographical notes, which will be inserted in the next chapter. They may serve to present an outline or general view of this work, like the first map in an atlas, to be followed in order by special charts, with minuter details, and on a larger scale.

CHAPTER II.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL MEMORANDA DICTATED BY WILLIAM WORDSWORTH, P. L., AT RYDAL MOUNT, NOVEMBER, 1847.

I WAS born at Cockermouth, in Cumberland, on April 7th, 1770, the second son of John Wordsworth, attorney-at-law, as lawyers of this class were then called, and law-agent to Sir James Lowther, afterwards Earl of Lonsdale. My mother was Anne, only daughter of William Cookson, mercer, of Penrith, and of Dorothy, born Crackanthorp, of the ancient family of that name, who from the times of Edward the Third had lived in Newbiggen Hall, Westmoreland. My grandfather was the first of the name of Wordsworth who came into Westmoreland, where he purchased the small estate of Sockbridge. He was descended from a family who had been settled at Peniston in Yorkshire, near the sources of the Don, probably before the Norman Conquest. Their names appear on different occasions in all the transactions, personal and public, connected with that parish; and I possess, through the kindness of Col. Beaumont, an almery made in 1525, at the expense of a William Wordsworth, as is expressed in a Latin inscription[1] carved upon it, which carries the pedigree of the family back four generations from himself.

---

[1] The original is as follows, some of the abbreviations being expanded: "Hoc opus fiebat anno domini MCCCXXV ex sumptu Willelmi Wordesworth filii W. fil. Joh. fil. W. fil. Nich.

The time of my infancy and early boyhood was passed partly at Cockermouth, and partly with my mother's parents at Penrith, where my mother, in the year 1778, died of a decline, brought on by a cold, the consequence of being put, at a friend's house in London, in what used to be called "a best bedroom." My father never recovered his usual cheerfulness of mind after this loss, and died when I was in my fourteenth year, a schoolboy, just returned from Hawkshead, whither I had been sent with my elder brother Richard, in my ninth year.

I remember my mother only in some few situations, one of which was her pinning a nosegay to my breast when I was going to say the catechism in the church, as was customary before Easter.[1] I remember also telling her on one week day that I had been at church, for our school stood in the churchyard, and we had frequent opportunities of seeing what was going on there. The occasion was, a woman doing penance in the church in a white sheet. My mother commended my having been present, expressing a hope that I should remember the circumstance for the rest of my

---

VIRI ELIZABETH FILLÆ ET HEREDIS W. PROCTOR DE PENYSTON QUORUM ANIMABUS PROPITIETUR DEUS."

On the almery are carved the letters "I. H. S." and "M.;" also the emblem of the Holy Trinity.

For further information concerning this oak press, see Mr. Hunter's paper in "Gentleman's Magazine" for July, 1850, p. 43.

[1] See Ecclesiastical Sonnets, Part iii. Sonnet xxii. "On Catechizing," vol. iv. p. 110.

Let me here observe, that the edition of Wordsworth's Poems to which reference will be made in the following Memoirs, is the last, in six vols. 24mo. 1849–50.

life. "But," said I, "Mama, they did not give me a penny, as I had been told they would." "Oh," said she, recanting her praises, "if that was your motive, you were very properly disappointed."

My last impression was having a glimpse of her on passing the door of her bedroom during her last illness, when she was reclining in her easy chair. An intimate friend of hers, Miss Hamilton by name, who was used to visit her at Cockermouth, told me that she once said to her, that the only one of her five children about whose future life she was anxious, was William; and he, she said, would be remarkable either for good or for evil. The cause of this was, that I was of a stiff, moody, and violent temper; so much so that I remember going once into the attics of my grandfather's house at Penrith, upon some indignity having been put upon me, with an intention of destroying myself with one of the foils which I knew was kept there. I took the foil in hand, but my heart failed. Upon another occasion, while I was at my grandfather's house at Penrith, along with my eldest brother, Richard, we were whipping tops together in the large drawing-room, on which the carpet was only laid down upon particular occasions. The walls were hung round with family pictures, and I said to my brother, "Dare you strike your whip through that old lady's petticoat?" He replied, "No, I won't." "Then," said I, "here goes;" and I struck my lash through her hooped petticoat, for which no doubt, though I have forgotten it, I was properly punished. But possibly, from some want of judgment in punishments inflicted, I had become perverse and obstinate in defying chastisement, and rather proud of it than otherwise.

Of my earliest days at school I have little to say, but that they were very happy ones, chiefly because I was left at liberty, then and in the vacations, to read whatever books I liked. For example, I read all Fielding's works, Don Quixote, Gil Blas, and any part of Swift that I liked; Gulliver's Travels, and the Tale of the Tub, being both much to my taste. I was very much indebted to one of the ushers of Hawkshead School, by name Shaw, who taught me more of Latin in a fortnight than I had learnt during two preceding years at the school of Cockermouth. Unfortunately for me this excellent master left our school, and went to Stafford, where he taught for many years. It may be perhaps as well to mention, that the first verses which I wrote were a task imposed by my master; the subject, "The Summer Vacation;" and of my own accord I added others upon "Return to School." There was nothing remarkable in either poem; but I was called upon, among other scholars, to write verses upon the completion of the second centenary from the foundation of the school in 1585, by Archbishop Sandys. These verses[1] were much admired, far more than they

---

[1] Lines written by William Wordsworth as a School Exercise at Hawkshead, anno ætatis 14. (Such is the title, but he must have been at least in his fifteenth year, if the year of the foundation is stated correctly.)

"And has the Sun his flaming chariot driven
Two hundred times around the ring of heaven,
Since Science first, with all her sacred train,
Beneath yon roof began her heavenly reign?
While thus I mused, me thought, before mine eyes,
The Power of EDUCATION seemed to rise;
Not she whose rigid precepts trained the boy
Dead to the sense of every finer joy;
Nor that vile wretch who bade the tender age
Spurn Reason's law and humour Passion's rage;

deserved, for they were but a tame imitation of Pope's versification, and a little in his style. This exercise,

---

But she who trains the generous British youth
In the bright paths of fair majestic Truth:
Emerging slow from Academus' grove
In heavenly majesty she seem'd to move.
Stern was her forehead, but a smile serene
'Soften'd the terrors of her awful mien.'
Close at her side were all the powers, design'd
To curb, exalt, reform the tender mind:
With panting breast, now pale as winter snows,
Now flush'd as Hebe, Emulation rose;
Shame follow'd after with reverted eye,
And hue far deeper than the Tyrian dye;
Last Industry appear'd with steady pace,
A smile sat beaming on her pensive face.
I gazed upon the visionary train,
Threw back my eyes, return'd, and gazed again.
When lo! the heavenly goddess thus began,
Through all my frame the pleasing accents ran.

"'When Superstition left the golden light
And fled indignant to the shades of night;
When pure Religion rear'd the peaceful breast,
And lull'd the warring passions into rest,
Drove far away the savage thoughts that roll
In the dark mansions of the bigot's soul,
Enlivening Hope display'd her cheerful ray,
And beam'd on Britain's sons a brighter day;
So when on Ocean's face the storm subsides,
Hush'd are the winds and silent are the tides;
The God of day, in all the pomp of light,
Moves through the vault of heaven, and dissipates the night;
Wide o'er the main a trembling lustre plays,
The glittering waves reflect the dazzling blaze;
Science with joy saw Superstition fly
Before the lustre of Religion's eye;
With rapture she beheld Britannia smile,
Clapp'd her strong wings, and sought the cheerful isle.
The shades of night no more the soul involve,
She sheds her beam, and, lo! the shades dissolve;

however, put it into my head to compose verses from the impulse of my own mind, and I wrote, while yet a

---

No jarring monks, to gloomy cell confined,
With mazy rules perplex the weary mind;
No shadowy forms entice the soul aside,
Secure she walks, Philosophy her guide.
Britain, who long her warriors had adored,
And deem'd all merit centred in the sword;
Britain, who thought to stain the field was fame,
Now honour'd Edward's less than Bacon's name.
Her sons no more in listed fields advance
To ride the ring, or toss the beamy lance;
No longer steel their indurated hearts
To the mild influence of the finer arts;
Quick to the secret grotto they retire
To court majestic truth, or wake the golden lyre;
By generous Emulation taught to rise,
The seats of learning brave the distant skies.
Then noble Sandys, inspir'd with great design,
Rear'd Hawkshead's happy roof, and call'd it mine;
There have I loved to show the tender age
The golden precepts of the classic page;
To lead the mind to those Elysian plains
Where, throned in gold, immortal Science reigns;
Fair to the view is sacred Truth display'd,
In all the majesty of light array'd,
To teach, on rapid wings, the curious soul
To roam from heaven to heaven, from pole to pole,
From thence to search the mystic cause of things,
And follow Nature to her secret springs;
Nor less to guide the fluctuating youth
Firm in the sacred paths of moral truth,
To regulate the mind's disorder'd frame,
And quench the passions kindling into flame;
The glimmering fires of Virtue to enlarge,
And purge from Vice's dross my tender charge.
Oft have I said, the paths of Fame pursue,
And all that Virtue dictates, dare to do;
Go to the world, peruse the book of man,
And learn from thence thy own defects to scan;
Severely honest, break no plighted trust,
But coldly rest not here — be more than just;

schoolboy, a long poem running upon my own adventures, and the scenery of the country in which I was brought up. The only part of that poem which has been preserved is the conclusion of it, which stands at the beginning of my collected Poems.[1]

In the month of October, 1787, I was sent to St. John's College, Cambridge, of which my uncle, Dr. Cookson, had been a fellow. The master, Dr. Chevallier, died very soon after[2]; and, according to the custom of that time, his body, after being placed in

---

Join to the rigours of the sires of Rome
The gentler manners of the private dome;
When Virtue weeps in agony of woe,
Teach from the heart the tender tear to flow;
If Pleasure's soothing song thy soul entice,
Or all the gaudy pomp of splendid Vice,
Arise superior to the Siren's power,
The wretch, the short-lived vision of an hour;
Soon fades her cheek, her blushing beauties fly,
As fades the chequer'd bow that paints the sky.
  So shall thy sire, whilst hope his breast inspires,
And wakes anew life's glimmering trembling fires,
Hear Britain's sons rehearse thy praise with joy,
Look up to heaven, and bless his darling boy.
If e'er these precepts quell'd the passions' strife,
If e'er they smooth'd the rugged walks of life,
If e'er they pointed forth the blissful way
That guides the spirit to eternal day,
Do thou, if gratitude inspire thy breast,
Spurn the soft fetters of lethargic rest.
Awake, awake! and snatch the slumbering lyre,
Let this bright morn and Sandys the song inspire.'

  "I look'd obedience: the celestial Fair
Smiled like the morn, and vanish'd into air."

[1] "Dear Native Regions," &c., vol. i. p. 1.

[2] He was succeeded by Dr. Craven in 1789.

the coffin, was removed to the hall of the college, and the pall, spread over the coffin, was stuck over by copies of verses, English or Latin, the composition of the students of St. John's. My uncle seemed mortified when upon inquiry he learnt that none of these verses were from my pen, "because," said he, "it would have been a fair opportunity for distinguishing yourself." I did not, however, regret that I had been silent on this occasion, as I felt no interest in the deceased person, with whom I had had no intercourse, and whom I had never seen but during his walks in the college grounds.

When at school, I, with the other boys of the same standing, was put upon reading the first six books of Euclid, with the exception of the fifth; and also in algebra I learnt simple and quadratic equations; and this was for me unlucky, because I had a full twelvemonth's start of the freshmen of my year, and accordingly got into rather an idle way; reading nothing but classic authors according to my fancy, and Italian poetry. My Italian master was named Isola, and had been well acquainted with Gray the poet. As I took to these studies with much interest, he was proud of the progress I made. Under his correction I translated the Vision of Mirza, and two or three other papers of the Spectator, into Italian. In the month of August, 1790, I set off for the Continent, in companionship with Robert Jones, a Welshman, a fellow-collegian. We went staff in hand, without knapsacks, and carrying each his needments tied up in a pocket handkerchief, with about twenty pounds apiece in our pockets. We crossed from Dover and landed at Calais on the eve of the day when the king was to swear fidelity to the new constitution: an event which was solemnised with due pomp at Calais. On the afternoon of that day we started, and slept at Ardres. For what seemed best to me worth recording in this tour, see the Poem of my own Life.[1]

After taking my degree in January, 1791, I went to London, stayed there some time, and then visited my friend Jones, who resided in the Vale of Clwydd, North Wales. Along with him I made a pedestrian tour through North Wales, for which also see the Poem.[2]

In the autumn of 1791 I went to Paris, where I stayed some little time, and then went to Orleans, with a view of being out of the way of my own countrymen, that I might learn to speak the language fluently. At Orleans, and Blois, and Paris, on my return, I passed fifteen or sixteen months.[3] It was a stirring time. The king was dethroned when I was at Blois, and the massacres of September took place when I was at Orleans. But for these matters see also the Poem. I came home before the execution of the king, and passed the subsequent time among my friends in London and elsewhere, till I settled with my only sister at Racedown in Dorsetshire, in the year 1796.

Here we were visited by Mr. Coleridge, then residing at Bristol; and for the sake of being near him when he had removed to Nether-Stowey, in Somersetshire, we removed to Alfoxden, three miles from that place. This was a very pleasant and productive time of my life. Coleridge, my sister, and I, set off on a tour to Linton and other places in Devonshire; and in order to defray his part of the expense, Coleridge on the same afternoon commenced his poem of the Ancient Mariner; in which I was to have borne my part, and a few verses were written by me, and some assistance given in planning the poem; but our styles agreed so little, that I withdrew from the concern, and he finished it himself.

---

[1] Prelude, book vi.

[2] Ibid. book xiv.

[3] This is not quite correct; the time of his absence did not exceed thirteen months.

In the course of that spring I composed many poems, most of which were printed at Bristol, in one volume, by my friend Joseph Cottle, along with Coleridge's Ancient Mariner, and two or three other of his pieces.

In the autumn of 1798, Mr. Coleridge, a friend of his Mr. Chester, my sister, and I, crossed from Yarmouth to Hamburgh, where we remained a few days, and saw, several times, Klopstock the poet. Mr. Coleridge and his friend went to Ratzburg, in the north of Germany, and my sister and I preferred going southward; and for the sake of cheapness, and the neighbourhood of the Hartz Mountains, we spent the winter at the old imperial city of Goslar. The winter was perishingly cold — the coldest of this century; and the good people with whom we lodged told me one morning, that they expected to find me frozen to death, my little sleeping room being immediately over an archway. However, neither my sister nor I took any harm.

We returned to England in the following spring, and went to visit our friends the Hutchinsons, at Sockburn-on-Tees, in the county of Durham, with whom we remained till the 19th of December. We then came, on St. Thomas's Day, the 21st, to a small cottage at Town-end, Grasmere, which, in the course of a tour some months previously with Mr.

Coleridge, I had been pleased with, and had hired. This we furnished for about a hundred pounds, which sum had come to my sister by a legacy from her uncle Crackanthorp.

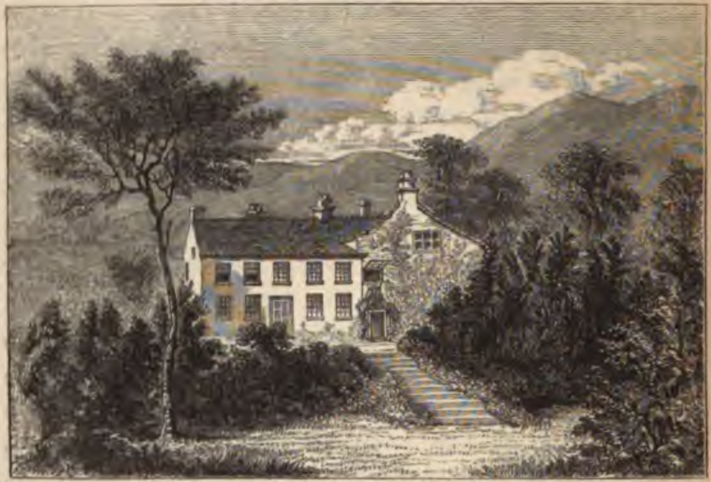
I fell to composition immediately, and published, in 1800, the second volume of the Lyrical Ballads.

In the year 1802 I married Mary Hutchinson, at Brompton, near Scarborough, to which part of the country the family had removed from Sockburn. We had known each other from childhood, and had practised reading and spelling under the same old dame at Penrith, a remarkable personage, who had taught three generations, of the upper classes principally, of the town of Penrith and its neighbourhood.

After our marriage we dwelt, together with our sister, at Townend, where three of our children were born. In the spring of 1808, the increase of our family caused us to remove to a larger house, then just built, Allan Bank, in the same vale; where our two younger children were born, and who died at the rectory, the house we afterwards occupied for two years. They died in 1812, and in 1813 we came to Rydal Mount, where we have since lived with no further sorrow till 1836, when my sister became a confirmed invalid, and our sister Sarah Hutchinson died. She lived alternately with her brother and with us.

CHAPTER III.

RYDAL MOUNT.



Two years and a half have passed away since the dictation of the autobiographical notes which have been inserted in the foregoing chapter. The voice which uttered them is still. The Poet fell asleep in death, and was buried in peace, by the side of his beloved daughter Dora, in Grasmere churchyard.

Here the present labour begins; and I sit down to perform it in the Poet's own abode.[1] RYDAL

---

[1] June, 1850.

MOUNT is now clad in all its summer beauty. Many persons of the present generation are familiar with the scene in which he habitually resided for the last thirty-seven years of his life; but they who may live in foreign climes, or in future ages, may feel a desire to form for themselves a picture of the place in which the Poet lived so long, in which he breathed his last, and with which his poems are, and ever will be, associated in the public mind.

I shall, therefore, describe it as it is now. The house stands upon the sloping side of a rocky hill, called Nab's Scar.[1] It has a southern aspect. In front of it is a small, semicircular area of grey gravel, fringed with shrubs and flowers, the house forming the diameter of the circle. From this area, there is a descent by a few stone steps southward, and then a gentle ascent to a grassy mound. Here let us rest a little. At our back is the house; in front, rather to the left in the horizon, is WANSFELL, on which the light of the evening sun rests, and to which the Poet has paid a grateful tribute in two of his later sonnets:—

---

[1] In the neighbouring woods of Rydal is the waterfall which was described in one of his earliest poems.

> " —— with sparkling foam, a small cascade
> Illumines from within the leafy shade,
> While thick above the rills, the branches close,
> In rocky basin its wild waves repose:
> Beyond . . . . .
> The eye reposes on a secret bridge,
> Half grey, half shagged with ivy to its ridge.
> There, bending o'er the stream, the listless swain
> Lingers behind his disappearing wain."
>
> *Evening Walk*, i. 4.

"Wansfell! this household has a favoured lot,
Living with liberty on thee to gaze."[1]

Beneath it, the blue smoke shows the place of the town of AMBLESIDE. In front is the lake of WINDERMERE, shining in the sun; also in front, but more to the right, are the fells of LOUGHRIGG, one of which throws up a massive solitary crag, on which the Poet's imagination pleased itself to plant an imperial castle[2]: —

"Aerial rock, whose solitary brow,
From this low threshold, daily meets the sight."[3]

Looking to the right, in the garden, is a beautiful glade, overhung with rhododendrons in most luxuriant leaf and bloom. Near them is a tall ash-tree, in which a thrush has sung for hours together during many years.[4] Not far from it is a laburnum, in which the osier cage of the doves was hung.[5] Below, to the west, is the vegetable garden, not parted off from the rest, but blended with it by parterres of flowers and shrubs.

Returning to the platform of grey gravel before the house, we pass under the shade of a fine sycamore, and ascend to the westward by fourteen steps of stones, about nine feet long, in the interstices of which grow the yellow flowering poppy and the wild geranium, or Poor Robin,

"Gay
With his red stalks upon a sunny day;"

a favourite with the Poet, as his verses show.[6] The steps above-mentioned lead to an upward *sloping* TERRACE, about two hundred and fifty feet long. On the right side it is shaded by laburnums, Portugal laurels, mountain ash, and fine walnut trees and cherries: on the left it is flanked by a low stone wall, coped with rude slates, and covered with lichens, mosses, and wild flowers. The fern waves on the walls, and at its base grows the wild strawberry and foxglove. Beneath this wall, and parallel to it, on the left, is a *level* TERRACE, constructed by the Poet for the sake of a friend most dear to him and his, who, for the last twenty years of Mr. Wordsworth's life, was often a visitor and inmate of Rydal Mount.[1] This terrace was a favourite resort of the Poet, being more easy for pacing to and fro, when old age began to make him feel the acclivity of the other terrace to be toilsome. Both these terraces command beautiful views of the vale of the Rothay, and the banks of the lake of Windermere.

---

[1] Vol. ii. p. 317, 318. Sonnets xlii. xliii.

[2] See Sonnet xi.

[3] Vol. ii. p. 265.

[4] See vol. ii. p. 313.

[5] Vol. ii. p. 55.

[6] See vol. v. p. 16. "Poor Robin," written March, 1840.

---

[1] That deep and tender affection which breathes in the Poet's writings, and has endeared him and them to so many hearts, is no where more gracefully and sweetly expressed than in the two following sonnets, hitherto unpublished, addressed to the same friend for whom the lower terrace was formed: —

On a Portrait of I. F., painted by Margaret Gillies.

"We gaze — nor grieve to think that we must die,
But that the precious love this friend hath sown
Within our hearts, the love whose flower hath blown
Bright as if heaven were ever in its eye,
Will pass so soon from human memory;
And not by strangers to our blood alone,
But by our best descendants be unknown,
Unthought of — this may surely claim a sigh.
Yet, blessed Art, we yield not to dejection;
Thou against Time so feelingly dost strive:
Where'er, preserved in this most true reflection,
An image of her soul is kept alive,
Some lingering fragrance of the pure affection,
Whose flower with us will vanish, must survive.
"WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.
"*Rydal Mount, New Year's Day*, 1840."

The *ascending* terrace leads to an arbour lined with fir-cones, from which, passing onward, on opening the latched door, we have a view of the lower end of

---

"*To I. F.*

"The star which comes at close of day to shine
More heavenly bright than when it leads the morn,
Is Friendship's emblem [*], whether the forlorn
She visiteth, or, shedding light benign
Through shades that solemnise Life's calm decline,
Doth make the happy happier. This have we
Learnt, Isabel, from thy society,
Which now we too unwillingly resign
Though for brief absence. But farewell! the page
Glimmers before my sight through thankful tears,
Such as start forth, not seldom, to approve
Our truth, when we, old yet unchill'd by age,
Call thee, though known but for a few fleet years,
The heart-affianced sister of our love!

"WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

"*Rydal Mount, Feb.* 1840."

[*] Variation:

"*Bright is* the star which comes *at eve* to shine
More heavenly bright than when it leads the morn.
And such is Friendship, whether the forlorn," &c.

The MSS. Notes, so often referred to in the present Memoir, are due to this friend, who induced Mr. Wordsworth to dictate them; and it is therefore to this friendship that posterity will owe the main part of its knowledge of the circumstances under which Mr. Wordsworth's Poems were composed.

In the present Memoir these Notes will be cited as "MSS. I. F."

These MSS. Notes are now in the possession of Mr. Wordsworth's son-in-law, EDWARD QUILLINAN, Esq., to whose liberality I am indebted for the free use of them in the present Memoir.

RYDAL LAKE, and of the long, wooded, and rocky hill of Loughrigg, beyond and above it. Close to this arbour-door is a beautiful sycamore, with five fine Scotch firs in the foreground, and a deep bay of wood, to the left and front, of oak, ash, holly, hazel, fir, and birch. The terrace-path here winds gently off to the right, and becomes what was called by the Poet and his household the "FAR TERRACE, on the mountain's side:"

"The Poet's hand first shaped it, and the steps
Of that same bard — repeated to and fro,
At morn, at noon, and under moonlight skies,
Through the vicissitudes of many a year —
Forbad the weeds to creep o'er its grey line." [1]

Here he

"scattered to the heedless winds
The vocal raptures of fresh poesy;"

and here he was often

"locked
In earnest converse with beloved friends."

The "far terrace," after winding along in a serpentine line for about 150 feet, ends at a little gate, beyond which is a beautiful well of clear water, called "the Nab Well," which was to the poet of Rydal — a professed water-drinker [2] — what the Bandusian fount was to the Sabine bard:

"Thou hast cheered a simple board
With beverage pure as ever fixed the choice
Of hermit dubious where to scoop his cell,
Which Persian kings might envy." [3]

---

[1] Vol. v. p. 64., Inscription ix. beginning —
"The massy ways," &c.

[2] See vol. v. p. 249., from Pref. to edit. of 1815.

[3] From an unpublished poem "To the Nab Well," "composed

Returning to the arbour, we descend, by a narrow flight of stone steps, to the kitchen-garden, and, passing through it southward, we open a gate and enter a field, sloping down to the valley, and called, from its owner's name, "Dora's field." Not far on the right, on entering this field, is the stone bearing the inscription, —

"In these fair vales hath many a tree
At Wordsworth's suit been spared.[1]
And from the builder's hand, this stone,
For some rude beauty of its own,
Was rescued by the Bard."

And the concluding lines will now be read with pathetic interest: —

"So let it rest; and time will come,
When here the tender-hearted
May heave a gentle sigh for him,
As one of the departed."[2]

Near the same gate, we see a pollard oak, on the top of whose trunk may yet be discerned some leaves of the primrose which sheltered the wren's nest: —

"—— she who planned the mossy lodge,
Mistrusting her evasive skill,
Had to a primrose looked for aid,
Her wishes to fulfil."[3]

On the left of this gate we see another oak, and beneath it a pool, to which the gold and silver fish, once swimming in a vase in the library of the house, were transported for the enjoyment of greater freedom: —

---

when a probability existed of our being obliged to quit Rydal Mount as a residence," 1826.

[1] Vol. v. p. 64., written 1830. [2] 1830.

[3] Vol. ii. p. 57., "A Wren's Nest."

"Removed in kindness from their glassy cell
To the fresh waters of a living well;
An elfin pool, so sheltered that its rest
No winds disturb."[1]

The verses which were suggested by the various fortunes of the fish will here be remembered with pleasure. Passing the pool, and then turning to the right, we come to some stone steps leading down the slope; and to the right, engraven on the rock, is the following inscription, allusive to the character of the descent:—

"Would'st thou be gathered to Christ's chosen flock,
Shun the broad way too easily explored,
And let thy path be hewn out of the Rock,
The living Rock of God's eternal Word."[2]

We return from this field to the house.[3]

---

[1] See vol. v. p. 10—12., "Gold and Silver Fishes in a Vase," and "Liberty."

[2] 1838.

[3] The following lines, descriptive of Rydal Mount, are from the pen of a person for whom Mr. Wordsworth entertained an affectionate regard. (See note to poem entitled "Liberty," vol. v. p. 16.)

"THE POET'S HOME."

BY MISS JEWSBURY.

(*Published in the Literary Magnet for* 1826.)

"Low and white, yet scarcely seen
Are its walls for mantling green;
Not a window lets in light
But through flowers clustering bright;
Not a glance may wander there,
But it falls on something fair;
Garden choice, and fairy mound,
Only that no elves are found;
Winding walk, and sheltered nook,
For student grave and graver book:
Or a birdlike bower, perchance,
Fit for maiden and romance.

It has been made familiar to many eyes by engravings, especially by one prefixed to the one-volume

---

Then, far off, a glorious sheen
Of wide and sunlit waters seen;
Hills that in the distance lie,
Blue and yielding as the sky;
And nearer, closing round the nest,
The home, of all the 'living crest,'
Other rocks and mountains stand,
Rugged, yet a guardian band,
Like those that did, in fable old,
Elysium from the world enfold.

. . . . companions meet
Thou shalt have in thy retreat:
One of long-tried love and truth,
Thine in age, as thine in youth;
One whose locks of partial grey
Whisper somewhat of decay;
Yet whose bright and beaming eye
Tells of more that cannot die.

Then a second form beyond,
Thine too, by another bond,
Sportive, tender, graceful, wild,
Scarcely woman, more than child, —
One who doth thy heart entwine
Like the ever-clinging vine;
One to whom thou art a stay,
As the oak that, scarred and grey,
Standeth on, and standeth fast,
Strong and stately to the last.

Poet's lot like this hath been;
Such, perchance, may I have seen;
Or in fancy's fairy land,
Or in truth and near at hand:
If in fancy, then, forsooth,
Fancy had the force of truth;
If, again, a truth it were,
Then was truth as fancy fair;
But whichever it might be,
' 'Twas a Paradise to me.'

"M. J. J."

edition of the Poet's works. It is a modest mansion, of a sober hue, tinged with weather stains, with two tiers of five windows; on the right of these is a porch, and above, and to the right, are two other windows; the highest looks out of what was the Poet's bedroom. The gable end at the east, that first seen on entering the grounds from the road, presents on the ground-floor the window of the old hall or dining-room. The house is mantled over here and there with roses and ivy, and jessamine and Virginia creeper.

We may pause on the threshold of the porch at the hospitable "SALVE" inscribed on the pavement brought by a friend from Italy. But the privacy of the interior shall not be invaded. Suffice it to say, that in the old hall or dining-room stands the ancestral almery brought from Penistone; and here are engravings of poets — Chaucer, Spenser, Shakspeare, Ben Jonson, and Milton — and also of the royal children, a gift from Her most Gracious Majesty the Queen to the Poet Laureate.

In the library — if by such name it may be called, for books are found dispersed indifferently in all the sitting-rooms of the ground floor, — are pictures from the pencil of the Poet's dear friend Sir G. H. Beaumont, illustrating two of the Poet's works — the "White Doe of Rylstone" and the "Thorn." In the adjoining room hangs the portrait which suggested those beautiful lines beginning with the words —

> "Beguiled into forgetfulness of care
> Due to the day's unfinished task, of pen
> Or book regardless, and of that fair scene
> In Nature's prodigality displayed

Before my window, oftentimes and long
I gaze upon a portrait.[1]

On the staircase hangs the picture brought with some others by the author's eldest son from Italy, and celebrated in the sonnet[2], —

"Giordano, verily thy pencil's skill
Hath here pourtrayed with Nature's happiest grace
The fair Endymion couched on Latmos hill."

Opposite is an engraving from Haydon's picture of the Duke of Wellington upon the field of Waterloo, commemorated in another sonnet[3]; and, not much further on, the Cuckoo Clock, immortalised by the Poet's imaginative and tender lines[4], —

"For service hangs behind his chamber door;"

and the voice which cheered him in his sleepless nights, and presented to his mind a train of blithe and vernal thoughts in winter nights,

"When tempests howl
Or nipping frosts remind thee trees are bare,"

still sounds from its retreat, and is heard throughout the house.

This clock struck twelve at noon, on Tuesday, April 23. 1850, when the Poet breathed his last.

---

[1] See vol. iv. p. 249., written 1834.

[2] Vol. iv. p. 141, written 1846.

[3] Vol. ii. p. 311. "By art's bold privilege warrior and war-horse stand," &c.

[4] "The Cuckoo-Clock," vol. ii. p. 204, beginning "Would'st thou be taught," &c.

CHAPTER IV.

BIRTH AND PARENTAGE OF WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

William Wordsworth was born at Cockermouth, in Cumberland, on the 7th of April, 1770, at 10 o'clock at night, and was baptized on the 13th day of the same month. The house in which he first saw the light is a large mansion (the property of Lord Lonsdale, and now occupied by Mr. Wood) on the left-hand side of the road on entering Cockermouth from Workington. He was the second son of John Wordsworth, and of Anne his wife.

The family of Wordsworth appears to have been settled at Penistone near Doncaster in the reign of Edward III., and from that reign (to quote the words of an eminent antiquarian and genealogist[1]) "no name appears more frequently than that of Wordsworth in deeds relating to that parish." In the reign of Henry VIII. A. D. 1525, one of the family recorded some generations of his pedigree by carving an inscription on an oak chest or almery, now at Rydal Mount.

In the notes to the ancient ballad, entitled "The Dragon of Wantley," A. D. 1603, published by Dr. Percy[2], Wordesworth of Penistone is described as cousin to the Dragon of Wantley, *i. e.* to Sir Francis Wortley.

---

[1] The Rev. Joseph Hunter, in his "History of the Deanery of Doncaster."

[2] Reliques, vol. iii. p. 296.

The branch of the family from which the Poet sprang was planted at Falthwaite near Stainborough, and thence removed to Sockbridge in Westmoreland in the earlier part of the last century.[1]

John Wordsworth, the father of the Poet, was the second son of Richard Wordsworth of Sockbridge near Penrith, and Mary, daughter of John Robinson of Appleby. He, the Poet's father, was born on November 27. 1741, and was an attorney-at-law of some eminence: he resided at Cockermouth, and was law-agent to the Earl of Lonsdale, and is described as a person of considerable mental vigour and eloquence. He was in the prime of life, and was rising rapidly to fame and opulence, when he died, in consequence of a cold caught on Coldfell, where he lost his way, and passed the night in the open air, in a professional ride from Broughton to Cockermouth. His death took place December 30. 1783. His remains were interred at Cockermouth. He left four sons and a daughter.

Anne, his wife, the Poet's mother, was born in January, 1747, and was the daughter of William Cookson, of Penrith, mercer, and Dorothy, daughter of James Crackanthorpe, of Newbiggen Hall. She was therefore descended by her mother's side from a very ancient family — one also, distinguished in the annals of learning by the name of Richard Crackanthorpe, D.D., one of the ablest and most learned divines in the most erudite age of English theology, the reign of James I. Anne Cookson was married to John Wordsworth, at Penrith, on the 5th February, 1766, and was buried there on March 11th, 1778, about five years and nine months before the death of her husband.

---

[1] For some further particulars concerning the genealogy of the family of Wordsworth, which will be found in the Appendix, I am indebted to the kindness of a valued friend and relative, Captain Robinson, R.N., of Ambleside, and to communications addressed to Mr. Wordsworth by the Rev. Joseph Hunter.

The issue of this marriage was as follows: —

1. RICHARD WORDSWORTH, born at Cockermouth, 19th August, 1768; baptized August 29. Attorney-at-Law, of Staple Inn, London. Died May 19. 1816.
2. WILLIAM WORDSWORTH, the poet, born April 7. 1770; baptized April 13. The subject of this Memoir.
3. DOROTHY WORDSWORTH, born on Christmas Day, 1771; baptized 18th January, 1772.
4. JOHN WORDSWORTH, born 4th December, 1772; baptized at Cockermouth. Commander of the Earl of Abergavenny East Indiaman, in which he perished by shipwreck off Weymouth, on the night of Friday, Feb. 5. 1805.
5. CHRISTOPHER WORDSWORTH, born at Cockermouth, June 9. 1774; baptized July 8. 1774. Elected Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, October 1. 1798. Married Priscilla, daughter of Charles Lloyd, Esq., banker, of Birmingham, October 6. 1804. Chaplain to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Manners Sutton. Dean of Bocking, May 30th, 1808. Rector of Lambeth, Surrey, and Sundridge, Kent, April 10. 1816. Installed Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, July 26. 1820. Died at Buxted, Sussex, Feb. 2. 1846.

The scene of William Wordsworth's birth-place, Cockermouth, was very favourable to the formation of the Poet's mind. The banks of the Derwent, near which Cockermouth stands, are very picturesque. The Poet bears testimony to its workings upon him, when he says,

> "One, the fairest of all rivers, loved
> To blend his murmurs with my nurse's song,
> And from his fords and shallows sent a voice
> That flowed along my dreams."[1]

And the old baronial castle, near which it flows, was not without its influence. When the Derwent

> "Had left these mountains and received
> On his smooth breast the shadow of those towers,
> That yet survive a shattered monument
> Of feudal sway, the bright blue river passed
> Along the margin of our terrace-walk."[2]

The town of Cockermouth, in which he was born, and in the churchyard[3] of which his father's remains are laid, and the mouldering castle, the play-ground of his childhood, suggested to him those reminiscences and reflections in his old age which are embodied in two of his most interesting sonnets, written in 1833.[4] Besides this, his "father's family"[5] contributed their due share to his poetical education.

His mother was a woman of piety and wisdom;

---

[1] Prelude, book i. p. 14.

[2] Ibid., p. 15.

[3] The church of Cockermouth was destroyed by fire on the morning of Friday, Nov. 15. 1850.

[4] Vol. iv. p. 146, Sonnets vi. and vii., "In sight of the Town of Cockermouth," and "Address from the Spirit of Cockermouth Castle."

[5] Vol. i. p. 147. See Poems referring to Childhood, vols. i. ii. iii.

and the reader will recollect those touching lines in which he refers to the time in which

> "He held mute dialogues with his mother's heart."[1]

And the confiding and enlarged spirit in which she conducted the early education of her children is admirably described in his autobiographical poem.[2]

But she was soon removed by death: —

> "Early died
> My honoured mother, she who was the heart
> And hinge of all our learnings and our loves.
> She left us destitute."[3]

In enumerating the Poet's earliest instructors, it would be unjust to omit the name of the ancient Dame at Penrith, to which place he was often taken to visit his maternal grand-parents. This venerable person was Mrs. Anne Birkett, whose system, as tradition reports, was very effective in exercising the *memory*, without prematurely taxing the *reasoning* powers, of her young pupils. Doubtless the Poet had her in his mind, when he wrote, in 1828, to his excellent friend, the Rev. Hugh James Rose, "The old *Dame* did not affect to make theologians, or *logicians*, but she taught to read, and she practised the *memory*, often no doubt *by rote;* but still the faculty was improved. Something perhaps she explained, and left the rest to parents, to masters, and to the pastor of the parish."

This system stands in strong contrast with the modern process of instruction, which, from a fear of being ridiculed for making children *learn by rote*, neglects the memory, and prematurely enfeebles the reason by overloading it; thus doing a double violence to nature. Among her pupils — for she instructed girls and boys together — was Mary Hutchinson, a few months younger than William Wordsworth, a daughter of John and Mary Hutchinson of Penrith, and afterwards the beloved wife of the Poet for nearly forty-eight years.

---

[1] Prelude, book ii. p. 44. See the whole passage from "Blest the infant babe," &c. p. 42.

[2] Ibid. p. 117.

[3] Ibid. p. 117.

When at Cockermouth he was instructed in the rudiments of learning by the Rev. Mr. Gilbanks; and it is recorded, that the Poet's father set him very early to learn portions of the works of the best English poets by heart, so that at an early age he could repeat large portions of Shakspeare, Milton, and Spenser.

The influence of his one sister, Dorothy Wordsworth, upon his life from his childhood was too important to be forgotten here. She was not quite two years younger than he was. Her loving tenderness and sweetness produced a most beneficial effect on his character. The contrast between the temper of the brother and sister is represented by the Poet himself in the verses where he alludes to the times in which (he says)

> "My sister Emmeline and I
> Together chased the butterfly.
> A very hunter did *I* rush
> Upon the prey . . .
> But *she*, God love her! feared to brush
> The dust from off its wings."[1]

And, speaking of her, he expresses his gratitude that she who was

---

[1] Vol. i. p. 148.

"The blessing of his later years,
Was with him when a boy."

And the nature of her influence upon him is thus pourtrayed:

"She gave me eyes, she gave me ears,
And humble cares, and delicate fears,
A heart, the fountain of sweet tears,
And love, and thought, and joy."[1]

But death came to the mother, and separated the brother and sister for some years. Dorothy Wordsworth was removed from Cockermouth to Penrith, the residence of her maternal grandfather; and eventually she was educated mainly at Halifax, under the care of her mother's cousin, Miss Threlkeld, afterwards married to W. Rawson, Esq., of Millhouse, near Halifax. She also resided occasionally with Dr. Cookson, Canon of Windsor, her maternal uncle, at Forncett, and at Windsor.

Here we must leave her for the present, and return to her brother William.

---

[1] Vol. i. p. 148.

CHAPTER V.

SCHOOL-TIME.

In the year 1778, soon after his mother's death, William Wordsworth, then in his ninth year, was sent to school at Hawkshead[1], in Lancashire. His elder brother, Richard, went with him; and his two other brothers, John and Christopher, followed him, in course of time, to the same place of education.

Hawkshead is a small market town in the vale of Esthwaite, and about a third of a mile to the north-west of the Lake, which lies between Windermere and Coniston, but nearer to Windermere, and almost parallel to both.

The Lake and Vale of Esthwaite are more remarkable for sweet and peaceful beauty than for grandeur or magnificence. Ascending to the church-yard you see westward Yewdale Fell, and northward in the horizon a picturesque outline of hills stretching from Helvellyn, on the left, along Fairfield and Rydal Head to Red Screes, and the White House on the Kirkstone Pass, to Hill Bell, and the fells over Ambleside, on the right. Nearer are green fields. To the south-east is the Lake, with its small floating island at the north end. To the left are meadows, and the vicarage in a dell beyond them.

The Church stands beautifully on a natural terrace-like mound, and is a simple, large, solid structure, with a square massive tower at the west end, and windows, in the perpendicular style of architecture, in the east end, and on the sides.

---

[1] See Prelude, p. 124.

To quote the Poet's words:

> "The snow-white church upon her hill
> Sits like a thronèd lady, sending out
> A gracious look all over her domain."[1]

The village, which consists mainly of white cottages, roofed with dark-grey slate, lies on the north and north-east below the hill on which the church stands. There is a sundial in the church-yard. Beneath the church-yard on the south-west is the SCHOOL:

> "The grassy church-yard hangs
> Upon a slope above the village school."[2]

And detached from it at a little distance is the master's house.

This SCHOOL was founded by Edwin Sandys, archbishop of York, in the year 1585. The fabric consists of a schoolroom on the ground floor, and some chambers on the first floor, in one of which is a library, and a tablet on the wall recording the name of the masters in succession. The boys were boarded in the village and neighbouring hamlets at the houses of *dames*.

> "Ye lowly cottages wherein we dwelt,
> A ministration of your own was yours;
> Can I forget you, being as you were
> So beautiful among the pleasant fields
> In which ye stood?"[3]

---

[1] Prelude, p. 86.

[2] Ibid. p. 123.

[3] Ibid. p. 24.

In William Wordsworth's time, when Hawkshead school was one of the most flourishing seminaries in the north of England, few of the surrounding cottages were without some inmates from among the scholars.

The head masters of the school in William Wordsworth's school days were —

Rev. James Peake, M. A., of St. John's Coll., Cambridge, master from 1766 to 1781.

Rev. Edward Christian, M. A., also of St. John's College, master in 1781.

Rev. William Taylor, M. A., Eman. Coll., Cambridge, master, 1782—1786.

And Rev. Thos. Bowman, M. A., Trin. Coll., Cambridge, master from 1786 to 1821.

The Rev. William Taylor was regarded by the Poet with much affection.[1] Taylor died while William Wordsworth was at school; and, just before his death, he sent for the upper boys into his chamber, among whom William was one; and there he took leave of them on his death-bed.

Doubtless it was this scene which prompted the following lines, addressed to the scholars of the village school of ——.

"I heard the blessing which to you,
Our common Friend and Father sent;
I kissed his cheek before he died."[2]

Mr. Taylor was buried in Cartmell church-yard; and by his command a stanza from Gray's Elegy[3] was inscribed on his tomb.

---

[1] See Prelude, p. 289.

[2] Vol. v. p. 124.

[3] Part of the epitaph, at the conclusion, ending with the words, "his Father and his God."

Eight years afterwards, William Wordsworth turned aside from his route over Ulverstone Sands, to visit his grave, and thus records his feelings on doing so, and refers to his master's words on his death-bed.

"I turned aside
To seek the ground where 'mid a throng of graves
An honoured teacher of my youth was laid,
And on the stone were graven by his desire
Lines from the churchyard-elegy of Gray.
This faithful guide, speaking from his death-bed,
Added no farewell to his parting counsel,
But said to me, 'My head will soon lie low;'
And when I saw the turf that covered him,
After the lapse of full eight years, those words,
With sound of voice and countenance of the Man,
Came back upon me, so that some few tears
Fell from me in my own despite.[1]

"He loved the Poets, and, if now alive,
Would have loved me, as one not destitute
Of promise, nor belying the kind hope
That he had formed, when I, at his command,
Began to spin, with toil, my earliest songs."

The Dame with whom William lodged was Anne Tyson. Of her also he has spoken with affectionate tenderness in the "Prelude."

"The thoughts of gratitude shall fall like dew
Upon thy grave, good creature!"[2]

Her garden, its brook, and dark pine tree, and the stone table under it, were all dear to his memory; and the chamber in which he

---

[1] Prelude, p. 289.

[2] P. 86.; see also p. 94. and the Poem on Nutting, vol. ii. p. 98.

"Had lain awake on summer nights to watch
The moon in splendour couched among the leaves
Of a tall ash, that near our cottage stood."[1]

She lived to above fourscore, unmarried, and loving her young inmates as her children, and beloved by them as a mother:

"Childless, yet by the strangers to her blood
Honoured with little less than filial love."[2]

The beauties of the village, and its lake and surrounding scenery, exercised a powerful influence on his mind, and have called forth frequent expressions of his admiration and love:

"Fair seed-time had my soul, and I grew up
Fostered alike by beauty and by fear;
Much favoured in my birth-place, and no less
In that beloved vale, to which ere long
We were transplanted."[3]

"Well do I call to mind the very week
When I was first intrusted to the care
Of that sweet valley."[4]

It was his habit to make the circuit of the lake — five miles — early, before school-hours, with one of his school-fellows (John Fleming, of Rayrigg), pacing side by side[5] —

"Repeating favourite verses with one voice,
Or conning more, as happy as the birds
That with us chanted."[6]

And, in the winter-season, when the lake was frozen over, and

"Clear and loud
The village clock tolled six" —

---

[1] See Prelude, p. 88.
[2] Ibid. p. 86.
[3] Ibid. p. 15.
[4] Ibid. p. 124.
[5] See p. 46.
[6] P. 130.

then was a time of rapture. The skates were braced on, and he and his comrades

"all shod with steel,
—— hissed along the polished ice in games
Confederate."[1]

He describes his own character at this period, as follows:

"Nothing at that time
So welcome, no temptation half so dear,
As that which urged me to a daring feat:
Deep pools, tall trees, black chasms, and dizzy crags,
And tottering towers — I loved to stand and read
Their looks."[2]

The meadows, also, and the mountains, and the "twilight glens,"[3] were his play-ground. Fishing and hunting were his games; and on holidays he and his fellows went further afield, to the broader waters of Windermere, and to the monastic ruin of Furness.

"Our pastime was, on bright half-holidays,
To sweep along the plain of Windermere,
With rival oars:"[4]

not without music, for they

"steered their course with one,
The Minstrel of the troop."[5]

But Esthwaite and Hawkshead were the home of his heart. The powers of nature seemed to belong, by

"a peculiar right,
To thee and thy grey huts, thou one dear Vale!"[6]

---

[1] Prelude, p. 21.

[2] First Book of Recluse, MS.

[3] Vol. i. p. 3.

[4] Prelude, p. 35.

[5] Ibid. p. 46. Robert Greenwood, afterwards Senior Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge.

[6] Ibid. p. 41.

Hawkshead furnished him not only with images of natural beauty, which enlarged and elevated his thoughts, and gave power, freshness, and grandeur to his imagination; but it also supplied material for the exercise of reflection and the affections. The character of "Matthew"[1] was doubtless formed in part from remembrances of his own instructors. His musings in the church-yard on the grave of his youthful playmate —

> "There was a boy; ye knew him well, ye cliffs
> And islands of Winander"[2] —

are full of pathos as well as of imaginative beauty. The "Lines left upon a Seat in a Yew Tree near Esthwaite Lake" indicate a nice observation of human character, and are a noble protest against moody selfishness and pride.[3] To which it may be added that the portraits of the Hanoverian and Non-Juror of "The Excursion"[4] were drawn from recollections at Hawkshead.

Concerning the lines left upon a yew-tree seat, Mr. Wordsworth thus expressed himself in 1843[5]: "Composed in part at school at Hawkshead. The tree has disappeared, and the slip of common on which it stood, that ran parallel to the lake, and lay open to it, has long been enclosed, so that the road has lost much of its attraction. This spot was my favourite walk in the evenings during the latter part of my school-time. The individual whose habits and character are here given was a gentleman of the neighbourhood, a man of talent and learning, who had been educated at one of our universities, and returned to pass his time in seclusion on his own estate. He died a bachelor in middle age. Induced by the beauty of the prospect, he built a small summer-house on the rocks above the peninsula on which the ferry-house stands.

---

[1] Vol. iv. p. 193—197.
[2] Prelude, p. 122.
[3] Vol. i. p. 39.
[4] Book vi. p. 183.
[5] MSS. I. F.

"This property afterwards passed into the hands of the late Mr. Curwen. The site was long ago pointed out by Mr. West in his "Guide" as the pride of the Lakes, and now goes by the name of "The Station." So much used I to be delighted with the view from it, while a little boy, that some years before the first pleasure-house was built, I led thither from Hawkshead a youngster about my own age, an Irish boy, who was a servant to an itinerant conjuror. My motive was to witness the pleasure I expected the boy would receive from the prospect of the islands below, and the intermingling water. I was not disappointed."

Nature appears to have done more for Wordsworth than books; yet he was not remiss as a student. He read much of English literature, especially works of imagination. He knew a great deal of English poetry by heart; and he wrote English verses at school. At that time it was not the custom of north-country schools to exercise their pupils much in *classical* composition. But Wordsworth was a fair Latin scholar; and he had made respectable progress in mathematics before he left school. His feelings on quitting Hawkshead are expressed in the lines —

"Dear native regions, I foretell,
From what I feel at this farewell,
My soul will cast the backward view,
The longing look alone on you."[1]

---

[1] Vol. i. p. 1.

His father had died while William was yet a schoolboy, and left him and his three brothers, and his sister, orphans in the year 1783. His father's estate was derived mainly from professional labour; and at his death the bulk of his fortune consisted in sums due to him from Sir James Lowther, afterwards Earl Lonsdale, whose legal agent he was. This debt was claimed on behalf of the orphans; but in vain. It remained unpaid till the Earl's death, in 1802, when it was liquidated, in a prompt and liberal manner, by his successor, the late Earl Lonsdale. At their father's decease the brothers were placed under the care of their two uncles, Richard Wordsworth and Christopher Crackanthorpe; and in the year 1787 William was sent by them to the University of Cambridge.

CHAPTER VI.

COLLEGE LIFE.

In the month of October, 1787, William Wordsworth, then in the eighteenth year of his age, commenced his residence at St. John's College, Cambridge. His feelings on his first arrival at the university are vividly pourtrayed by himself in his biographical poem.[1] He there also describes his occupations; and to that description the reader is referred.

Suffice it to say, the picture is not a bright one. In some respects he was not very well prepared to profit by the influences of the university. His previous scholastic training had not been of a kind to qualify him for pursuing the studies of Cambridge with the same prospect of success as was within the reach of students tutored in the great public schools. Hence, intellectually, he and the university were not in full sympathy with each other. Besides, he had never been subject to restraint: his school days were days of freedom; and latterly, since the death of his parents, he was almost entirely his own master. In addition to this, his natural temperament was eager, impetuous, and impatient of control.

> "While yet an innocent, I breathed,"

he says,

---

[1] Prelude, books iii. and vi.

"Among wild appetites, and blind desires,
Motions of savage instinct my delight
And exultation."[1]

He was not prepared by habit or disposition to submit with genial affection and reverent humility to the discipline of a college; especially when that discipline was administered by some who did not appear to comprehend its true meaning, and did not embody its spirit in their lives.

But, on the other hand, William Wordsworth brought with him to Cambridge an imagination elevated, an intellect enlarged, and affections solemnised, by intercourse with the powers of nature in their most majestic form. And he had a clear sense of what was noble, just, and true. If, therefore, the tone of the university had then been higher than it was — if the lives of the members of the university, and especially of its rulers, had been holier — if a spirit of dignified self-respect and severe self-denial had breathed in their deportment — and if an adequate appreciation of what was due to the memory and injunctions of their founders and benefactors, and a religious reverence for the inheritance of piety, wisdom, and learning, bequeathed to them by antiquity, had manifested itself in their practice; then, it can hardly be doubted, the authentic influence of the academic system would have made itself felt by him. Cambridge would have stamped its image upon the mind of Wordsworth; he would have paid it dutiful homage, filial obedience, and affectionate veneration.

But, at that period of academic history, the case was otherwise. Hence he felt himself to stand at a higher elevation of moral dignity than some of his teachers. The youthful under-graduate looked down upon some of his instructors. He saw sacred services provided day after day, morning and evening, by his college, and he found that he and his fellow students were statutably required to attend them. But he looked in vain for the presence of many of those who ate the bread of the founders, and were supposed to administer the statutes, and had bound themselves by solemn engagements to observe the laws of the college, and to be examples to the younger members of the society, and especially to maintain that collegiate unity which cannot subsist without religious communion.

---

[1] First book of "The Recluse," still unpublished.

He felt that there was something like hollow mockery and profane hypocrisy in this. He resented it as an affront to himself and to his fellow students, as members of the academic body. And, as is often the case with ardent and enthusiastic minds, he charged the institution with the sins of those who professed to administer its laws, but in practice violated them. He would have visited the offences of its governors on the system which they abused. He would have suspended the daily service in the college chapels, because some of the fellows betrayed their trust, and neglected those services, and led self-indulgent or irreligious lives.

In maturer years, he revised his opinion in this important respect, as will be seen hereafter: he learnt and taught that every system, however good, is liable to abuse; and that when what is good is abused, the abuse affords no ground for its destruction; but that, on the other hand, it is the work of patience, charity, and wisdom, to endeavour to remove the abuse, and restore the true use of that which has been abused. This he knew to be the vital principle of all genuine reform; and he taught also that no education is worthy of the name which does not look for habitual strength and support in divine grace given to united prayer.

In his maturer years, instead of *desiring* the cessation of daily services where they existed, he *deplored* it where they had been disused. He regretted the ancient times of

"Matrons and sires, — who, punctual to the call
Of their loved Church, on fast and festival,
Through the long year, the house of prayer would seek;
By Christmas snows, by visitation bleak
Of Easter winds unscared ——"[1]

In another respect, also, he modified his judgment with regard to the university. While he was an under-graduate, his mind was not in harmony with the studies of the place. He did not tread in the beaten path, prescribed by academic authority, and leading to academic distinctions. He appears to have indulged a feeling of intellectual pride in taking a devious course — much to the disappointment of his relatives and friends. His last summer vacation was not spent amid his books, but among the Alps. The week before he took his degree he passed his time in reading Clarissa Harlowe. But in later years his view was changed. To one of his nephews, an under-graduate, he said, "Do not trouble yourself with reading *modern* authors *at present;* confine your attention to ancient classical writers; make yourself master of them: and when you have done that, you will come down to *us;* and then you will be able to judge us according to our deserts." And he wrote a very earnest letter to one of his intimate friends, Mr. Clarkson, on hearing that his son did not intend to be a candidate for university honours; and he there expresses his regret at that intelligence, and endeavours to induce the young student to change his intention, and to devote himself to the studies, and to contend for the honours, of the university.

---

[1] See Sonnet on "Decay of Piety," vol. ii. p. 271.

The academic life of an under-graduate, especially one so gifted as William Wordsworth, who feels that he is "not for that hour, nor for that place,"[1] is rarely a profitable or a happy one. He is inwardly dissatisfied, and ill at ease. He is liable to fall into a lower grade of society; to squander his time on aimless projects and desultory pursuits; to contract irregular habits; to cherish

"A treasonable growth
Of indecisive judgments, that impair
And shake the mind's simplicity;"[2]

and to become familiar with scenes which are unfavourable to his moral progress, and prey on his inward strength. His aspirations decline; and, being discontented with his own position, he is apt to look with sour and splenetic sullenness on the laws of the institution in which he lives.

The mind of Wordsworth was indeed cheered at Cambridge, the "garden of great intellects," by visions of the illustrious dead, who had been trained in that university — Chaucer, Spenser, Ben Jonson, Milton[1], Cowley, Dryden; and he resorted with delight to the groves and walks, especially those of St. John's,

---

[1] Prelude, p. 58.

[2] Ibid. p. 64.

> "Whenever free to choose
> Did I by night frequent the college groves
> And tributary walks;"[2]

and he describes one venerable tree, now no more, in those walks, which, on successive sojourns at Cambridge, he never failed to visit with feelings of affection.

But it is remarkable, that while his school and school days had produced poetic fruits, and while his extant writings abound with beautiful and grateful allusions to the scenes of his infancy and boyhood, scarce a single line appears to have been suggested by his residence at Cambridge, while he was at the university. His "Evening Walk,"[3] was, indeed, composed during the academic period, but none of its imagery is derived from academic scenes. The only verses which are known to have been produced by him at Cambridge are those "written while sailing in a boat at evening."[4] These were composed on the Cam.

Upon the whole, the Poet's reminiscences of his college life are of a melancholy cast. They are characterised by the sternness of an Archilochus, mingled with the sadness of a Simonides. It was reserved to his later days to write those two noble sonnets[5] on King's College Chapel, Cambridge, and to characterise the universities of England, as

---

[1] Prelude, p. 67.

[2] Ibid. p. 138.

[3] Vol. i. p. 2—14.

[4] Vol. i. p. 14.

[5] Eccles. Sonnets, vol. iv. p. 121.

"The sacred nurseries of blooming youth,
In whose collegiate shelter England's flowers
Expand; enjoying through their vernal hours
The air of LIBERTY, the light of TRUTH."[1]

His portrait now graces the walls of St. John's College, Cambridge; and his reception at Oxford, when the degree of D. C. L. was conferred upon him in the year 1839, was one of the most enthusiastic that was ever given to any of those whom that noble university has delighted to honour.

---

[1] Vol. ii. p. 297. Misc. Sonnets, part iii. Sonnet ii. written May, 1820.

CHAPTER VII.

COLLEGE VACATIONS.

University life in England is diversified and relieved by vacations, of which that which recurs in the summer months is of sufficient length to afford a complete change of scene to the mind of the student. This is often a fortunate circumstance, and it was particularly so in the case of William Wordsworth. If his university course had been continued with little and brief intermission throughout the year, or if he had spent his vacations at Cambridge, it is probable that the influences derived from early familiarity with the grand and beautiful operations of nature, which had given vigour and independence to his intellect, and fervour to his imagination, would have become feebler and feebler, and that his spiritual and moral being would have declined in dignity, and have been impaired in strength.

Happily for him, he returned for his first summer vacation, in 1788, to his beloved vale of Esthwaite. The young collegian lodged in the same house, and slept in the same bed, as that which he had occupied when a school-boy. He revisited his old haunts. The spirit of the lake and the vale, — the fresh air of the woods, and fields, and mountains, — breathed new life into his soul. He derived new buoyancy and energy from the scenes of his early days, as one who has long been languishing on a bed of sickness drinks in health from the breezes of some beautiful region in which he was born.

The revivifying effects of this natural agency are described by Wordsworth in the fourth book of his autobiographical poem:

> "When from our better selves we have too long
> Been parted by the hurrying world, and droop,
> Sick of its business, of its pleasures tired,
> How gracious, how benign is solitude!"[1]

And, describing the effect of one of his walks at early dawn at this time, and in this country, he says,

> "My heart was full; I made no vows, but vows
> Were then made for me; bond unknown to me
> Was given, that I should be, else sinning greatly,
> A dedicated Spirit. On I walked
> In thankful blessedness, which yet survives."[2]

Portions of his vacations were spent in other beautiful parts of England. His mother's relatives resided at Penrith, on the southern frontier of Cumberland. Here he was restored to the society of his sister, and of her who was one day to be nearer to him than a sister.[3] He enjoyed with them those delightful scenes by which Penrith is surrounded. He mounted the Border Beacon, on the north-east of the town; and on that eminence, now overgrown with fir-trees which intercept the view, but which was then free and open, and displayed a glorious panorama, he beheld the wide plain stretched far and near below, closed by the dark hills of Ulleswater on the west, and by the dim ridges of Scotland on the north.

---

[1] Prelude, p. 99.

[2] Ibid. p. 99.

[3] Ibid. p. 144, 145.

The road from Penrith towards Appleby, on the south-east, passes, at about a mile's distance, the romantic ruins of that

"monastic castle, mid tall trees,
Lowstanding by the margin of the stream,"[1]

where the river Lowther flows into the Emont, which descends from the lake of Ulleswater through a beautiful and fertile valley, in which, at the village of Sockbridge, some of Wordsworth's ancestors lived, and where, at the church of Barton, some of them lie buried.

That "monastic castle" is Brougham Castle, a noble and picturesque ruin. This was a favourite resort of the youthful Poet and his sister:

"Those mouldering towers
Have seen us side by side, when having clomb
The darksome windings of a broken stair,
And crept along a ridge of fractured wall,
Not without trembling, we in safety looked
Forth, through some Gothic window's open space,
And gathered, with one mind, a rich reward
From the far-stretching landscape, by the light
Of morning beautified, or purple eve."[2]

In after times, this castle was to be the subject of one of his noblest lyrical effusions, the "Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle:"

"High in the breathless hall the minstrel sate,
And Emont's murmur mingled with the song."[3]

A little beyond the castle, by the road-side, stands the Countess' Pillar, a record of filial affection and Christian charity, to which also he has paid a poetical tribute[1]; and the woods of Lowther, at a short distance on the south, were ever associated in his memory with the delightful days which he passed in his vacations at Penrith, and were afterwards the scene of intellectual enjoyment in the society of the noble family whose name they bear.

---

[1] Prelude, p. 143.

[2] Ibid. p. 144.

[3] Vol. ii. p. 144.

A remarkable person, and one connected by friendship with the Poet, lived, between Penrith and Lowther, at Yanwath. This was Mr. Thomas Wilkinson, a quaker, a poet, a professor of the topiarian art, a designer of walks, prospects, and pleasure-grounds.

> "Spade! with which Wilkinson hath tilled his lands,
> And shaped these pleasant walks by Emont's side,"[2]

and the verses which follow, will hand down the name of Wilkinson to posterity, together with that of John Evelyn, and the Corycian old man of Virgil.

William Wordsworth's last summer college-vacation was spent in a pedestrian tour in France. He was accompanied by his friend and brother collegian, Robert Jones, of Plas-yn-llan, near Ruthin, in Denbighshire, and afterwards a fellow of St. John's College, and incumbent of Soulderne, near Deddington, in Oxfordshire, the parsonage of which is so happily described in the sonnet —

> "Where holy ground begins, unhallowed ends,
> Is marked by no distinguishable line."[3]

The character of Mr. Jones was drawn by the Poet in the lines beginning

> "I marvel how Nature could ever find space
> For so many strange contrasts in one human face."[4]

---

[1] Vol. iii. p. 236.
[2] Vol. iv. p. 202.
[3] Vol. ii. p. 300.
[4] Vol. iv. p. 183.

The tourists quitted Dover for Calais on July 13th, 1790, — a memorable era in the history of the French Revolution, — the eve of the day when the king took an oath of fidelity to the new constitution.

> "JONES! as from Calais southward you and I
> Went pacing side by side, this public way
> Streamed with the pomp of a too credulous day,
> When faith was pledged to new-born liberty."[1]

A letter has been preserved, addressed to his sister, which describes some of the impressions made by this tour; and it will be read with interest as a record of his feelings, and a specimen of his style, at that period of his life[2]: —

---

[1] Vol. iii. p. 54.; see also Prelude, p. 149.

[2] The route of the tourists was as follows: —

July
13. Calais.
14. Ardres.
17. Peronne.
18. Village near Couçy.
19. Soissons.
20. Château Thierry.
21. Sezanne.
22. Village near Troyes.
23. Bar le Duc.
24. Chatillon sur Seine.
26. Nuits.
27. Châlons.
28. Châlons.
29. On the Saone.
30. Lyons.
31. Condrieu.
Aug.
1. Moreau.
2. Voreppe.
3. Village near Chartreuse.
4. Chartreuse.
6. Aix.
7. Town in Savoy.
Aug.
8. Town on Lake of Geneva.
9. Lausanne.
10. Villeneuve.
11. St. Maurice in the Valais.
12. Chamouny.
13. Chamouny.
14. Martigny.
15. Village beyond Sion.
16. Brig.
17. Spital on Alps.
18. Margozza.
19. Village beyond Lago Maggiore.
20. Village on Lago di Como.
21. Village beyond Gravedona.
22. Jones at Chiavenna; W. W. at Samolaco.
23. Sovozza.
24. Splugen.
25. Flems.
26. Dissentis.
27. Village on the Reuss.

“ *Sept.* 6. 1790, *Keswill* (*a small village on the Lake of Constance*).

“ My dear Sister,

“ My last letter was addressed to you from St. Valier and the Grande Chartreuse. I have, since that period, gone over a very considerable tract of country, and I will give you a sketch of my route as far as relates to mentioning places where I have been, after I have assured you that I am in excellent health and spirits, and have had no reason to complain of the contrary during our whole tour. My spirits have been kept in a perpetual hurry of delight, by the almost uninterrupted succession of sublime and beautiful objects

---

Aug.
28. Fluelan.
29. Lucerne.
30. Village on Lake of Zurich.
31. Einsiedeln.

Sept.
1. Glaris.
2. Glaris.
3. Village beyond Lake of Wallenstadt.
4. Village on road to Appenzell.
5. Appenzell.
6. Keswill, on Lake of Constance.
7. On the Rhine.
8. On the Rhine.
9. On road to Lucerne.
10. Lucerne.
11. Saxeln.
12. Village on the Aar.

Sept.
13. Grindelwald.
14. Lauterbrunnen.
15. Village three leagues from Berne.
16. Avranches.
19. Village beyond Pierre Pertuises.
20. Village four leagues from Basle.
21. Basle.
22. Town six leagues from Strasburg.
23. Spires.
24. Village on Rhine.
26. Mentz.
27. Village on Rhine, two leagues from Coblentz.
28. Cologne.
29. Village three leagues from Aix-la-Chapelle.

No further memoranda. The pedestrians bought a boat at Basle, and therein floated down the Rhine as far as Cologne, having intended so to travel to Ostend, but they returned by Calais.

which have passed before my eyes during the course of the last month. I will endeavour to give you some idea of our route. It will be utterly impossible for me to dwell upon particular scenes, as my paper would be exhausted before I had done with the journey of two or three days. On quitting the Grande Chartreuse, where we remained two days, contemplating, with increased pleasure, its wonderful scenery, we passed through Savoy to Geneva; thence, along the Pays de Vaud side of the lake, to Villeneuve, a small town seated at its head. The lower part of the lake did not afford us a pleasure equal to what might have been expected from its celebrity; this owing partly to its width, and partly to the weather, which was one of those hot gleamy days in which all distant objects are veiled in a species of bright obscurity. But the higher part of the lake made us ample amends: 'tis true we had some disagreeable weather, but the banks of the water are infinitely more picturesque, and, as it is much narrower, the landscape suffered proportionally less from that pale steam which before almost entirely hid the opposite shore. From Villeneuve we proceeded up the Rhone to Martigny, where we left our bundles, and struck over the mountains to Chamouny, and visited the glaciers of Savoy. You have undoubtedly heard of these celebrated scenes, but if you have not read about them, any description which I have room to give you must be altogether inadequate. After passing two days in the environs of Chamouny, we returned to Martigny, and pursued our mount up the Valais, along the Rhine, to Brig. At Brig we quitted the Valais, and passed the Alps at the Simplon, in order to visit part of Italy. The impressions of three hours of our walk among these Alps will never be effaced. From Duomo d'Ossola, a town of Italy which lay in our route, we proceeded to the lake of Locarno, to visit the Boromean Islands, and thence to Como. A more charming path was scarcely ever travelled over. The banks of many of the Italian and Swiss lakes are so steep and rocky, as not to admit of roads; that of Como is partly of this character. A small foot-path is all the communication by land between one village and another, on the side along which we passed, for upwards of thirty miles. We entered upon this path about noon, and, owing to the steepness of the banks, were soon unmolested by the sun, which illuminated the woods, rocks, and villages of the opposite shore. The lake is narrow, and the shadows of the mountains were early thrown across it. It was beautiful to watch them travelling up the side of the hills, — for several hours to remark one half of a village covered with shade, and the other bright with the strongest sunshine. It was with regret that we passed every turn of this charming path, where every new picture was purchased by the loss of another which we should never have been tired of gazing upon. The shores of the lake consist of steeps covered with large, sweeping woods of chestnut, spotted with villages; some clinging from the summits of the advancing rocks, and others hiding themselves within their recesses. Nor was the surface of the lake less interesting than its shores; half of it glowing with the richest green and gold, the reflection of the illuminated wood and path, shaded with a soft blue tint. The picture was still further diversified by the number of sails which stole lazily by us as we paused in the wood above them. After all this we had the moon. It was impossible not to contrast that repose, that complacency of spirit, produced by these lovely scenes, with the sensations I had experienced two or three days before, in passing the Alps. At the lake of Como, my mind ran through a thousand dreams of happiness, which might be enjoyed upon its banks, if heightened by conversation and the exercise of the social affections. Among the more awful scenes of the Alps, I had not a thought of man, or a single created being; my whole soul was turned to Him who produced the terrible majesty before me. But I am too particular for the limits of my paper.

"We followed the lake of Como to its head, and thence proceeded to Chiavenna, where we began to pass a range of the Alps, which brought us into the country of the Grisons at Sovozza. From Sovozza we pursued the valley of Myssen, in which it is situated, to its head; passed Mount Adula to Hinter Rhine, a small village near one of the sources of the Rhine. We pursued this branch of the Rhine downward through the Grisons to Michenem, where we turned up the other branch of the same river, and following it to Chiamut, a small village near its source. Here we quitted the Grisons, and entered Switzerland at the valley of Urseren, and pursued the course of the Reuss down to Altorf; thence we proceeded, partly upon the lake and partly behind the mountains on its banks, to Lucerne, and thence to Zurich. From Zurich, along the banks of the lake, we continued our route to Richtenschwyl: here we left the lake to visit the famous church and convent of Einsiedeln, and thence to Glaris. But this catalogue must be shockingly tedious. Suffice it to say, that, after passing a day in visiting the romantic valley of Glaris, we proceeded by the lake of Wallenstadt and the canton of Appenzell to the lake of Constance, where this letter was begun nine days ago. From Constance we proceeded along the banks of the Rhine to Schaffhausen, to view the falls of the Rhine there. Magnificent as this fall certainly is, I must confess I was disappointed in it. I had raised my ideas too high.

"We followed the Rhine downward about eight leagues from Schaffhausen, where we crossed it, and proceeded by Baden to Lucerne. I am at this present moment (14th September) writing at a small village on the road from Grindelwald to Lauterbrunnen. By consulting your maps, you will find these villages in the south-east part of the canton of Berne, not far from the lakes of Thun and Brientz. After viewing the valley of Lauterbrunnen, we shall have concluded our tour of the more Alpine part of Switzerland. We proceed thence to Berne, and intend, after making two or three small excursions about the lake of Neufchatel, to go to Basle, a town in Switzerland, upon the Rhine, whence we shall, if we find we can afford it, take advantage of the river down to Cologne, and so cross to Ostend, where we shall take the packet to Margate. To-day is the 14th of September; and I hope we shall be in England by the 10th of October. I have had, during the course of this delightful tour, a great deal of uneasiness from an apprehension of your anxiety on my account. I have thought of you perpetually; and never have my eyes burst upon a scene of particular loveliness but I have almost instantly wished that you could for a moment be transported to the place where I stood to enjoy it. I have been more particularly induced to form those wishes, because the scenes of Switzerland have no resemblance to any I have found in England; consequently it may probably never be in your power to form an idea of them. We are now, as I observed above, upon the point of quitting these most sublime and beautiful parts; and you cannot imagine the melancholy regret which I feel at the idea. I am a perfect enthusiast in my admiration of nature in all her various forms; and I have looked upon, and, as it were, conversed with, the objects which this country has presented to my view so long, and with such increasing pleasure, that the idea of parting from them oppresses me with a sadness similar to what I have always felt in quitting a beloved friend.

" There is no reason to be surprised at the strong attachment which the Swiss have always shown to their native country. Much of it must undoubtedly have been owing to those charms which have already produced so powerful an effect upon me, and to which the rudest minds cannot possibly be indifferent. Ten thousand times in the course of this tour have I regretted the inability of my memory to retain a more strong impression of the beautiful forms before me; and again and again, in quitting a fortunate station, have I returned to it with the most eager avidity, in the hope of bearing away a more lively picture. At this moment, when many of these landscapes are floating before my mind, I feel a high enjoyment in reflecting that perhaps scarcely a day of my life will pass in which I shall not derive some happiness from these images.

" With regard to the manners of the inhabitants of this singular country, the impressions which we have had often occasion to receive have been unfavourable;

but it must be remembered that we have had little to do but with innkeepers, and those corrupted by perpetual intercourse with strangers. Had we been able to speak the language, which is German, and had we time to insinuate ourselves into their cottages, we should probably have had as much occasion to admire the simplicity of their lives as the beauties of their country. My partiality to Switzerland, excited by its natural charms, induces me to hope that the manners of the inhabitants are amiable; but at the same time I cannot help frequently comparing them with those of the French, and, as far as I have had opportunity to observe, they lose very much by the comparison. We not only found the French a much less imposing people, but that politeness diffused through the lowest ranks had an air so engaging that you could scarce attribute it to any other cause than real benevolence. During the time, which was near a month, that we were in France, we had not once to complain of the smallest deficiency in courtesy in any person, much less of any positive rudeness. We had also perpetual occasion to observe that cheerfulness and sprightliness for which the French have always been remarkable. But I must remind you that we crossed at the time when the whole nation was mad with joy in consequence of the revolution. It was a most interesting period to be in France; and we had many delightful scenes, where the interest of the picture was owing solely to this cause. I was also much pleased with what I saw of the Italians during the short time we were among them. We had several times occasion to observe a softness and elegance which contrasted strongly with the severe austereness of their neighbours on the other side of the Alps. It was with pleasure I observed, at a small inn on the lake of Como, the master of it playing upon his harpsichord, with a large collection of Italian music about him. The outside of the instrument was such that it would not much have graced an English drawing-room; but the tones that he drew from it were by no means contemptible.

"But it is time to talk about England. When you write to my brothers, I must beg of you to give my love, and tell them I am sorry it has not been in my power to write to them. Kit will be surprised he has not heard from me, as we were almost upon terms of regular correspondence. I had not heard from Richard for some time before I set out. I did not call upon him when I was in London; not so much because we were determined to hurry through London, but because he, as many of our friends at Cambridge did, would look upon our scheme as mad and impracticable. I expect great pleasure, on my return to Cambridge, in exulting over those of my friends who threatened us with such an accumulation of difficulties as must undoubtedly render it impossible for us to perform the tour. Every thing, however, has succeeded with us far beyond my most sanguine expectations. We have, it is true, met with little disasters occasionally, but far from distressing, and they rather gave us additional resolution and spirits. We have both enjoyed most excellent health; and we have been so inured to walking, that we are become almost insensible to fatigue. We have several times performed a journey of thirteen leagues over the most mountainous parts of Switzerland without any more weariness than if we had been walking an hour in the groves of Cambridge. Our appearance singular; and we have often observed, that, in assing through a village, we have excited a general mile. Our coats, which we had made light on purpose for the journey, are of the same piece; and our manner of carrying our bundles, which is upon our heads, with each an oak stick in our hands, contributes not a little to that general curiosity which we seem to excite. But I find I have again relapsed into egotism, and must here entreat you, not only to pardon this fault, but also to make allowance for the illegible hand and desultory style of this letter. It has been written, as you will see by its different shades, at many sittings, and is, in fact, the produce of most of the leisure which I have had since it was begun, and is now finally drawing to a conclusion, it being on the 16th of September. I flatter myself still with the hope of seeing you for a fortnight or three weeks, if it be agreeable to my uncle, as there will be no necessity for me to be in Cambridge before the 10th of November. I shall be better able to judge whether I am likely to enjoy this pleasure in about three weeks. I shall probably write to you again before I quit France; if not, most certainly immediately on my landing in England. You will remember me affectionately to my uncle and aunt: as he was acquainted with my giving up all thoughts of a fellowship, he may, perhaps, not be so much displeased at this journey. I should be sorry if I have offended him by it. I hope my little cousin is well. I must now bid you adieu, with assuring you that you are perpetually in my thoughts, and that

"I remain,
"Most affectionately yours,
"W. WORDSWORTH.

"On looking over this letter, I am afraid you will not be able to read half of it. I must again beg you to excuse me.

"*Miss Wordsworth,*
Rev. Wm. Cookson's,
Long Stretton, Norfolk,
L'Angleterre."

This tour supplied material for a portion of his autobiographical poem, with which the reader is supposed to be familiar.[1] It also furnished the subject for a poem, entitled "Descriptive Sketches," written in 1791 and '92, addressed to his fellow traveller, Jones, and published in the year 1793.[2]

A comparison of the treatment of the same topics in *this* poem, and in the *Prelude*, written about ten years afterwards, will be interesting, inasmuch as it exhibits the change of style which had taken place in that period.

In the same year, with the "Descriptive Sketches," appeared the "Evening Walk," written in 1787, '88, and '89, and "addressed to a young lady." The scene of the "Evening Walk" is among the lakes of the author's own country.

Both these poems display an accurate observation of nature, much richness of imagery, and much power of delineation. They are written in vigorous language, and with somewhat of sternness and ruggedness, labouring, as it were, under constraint to accommodate itself to Pope's manner of versification, which was by no means favourable for the expression of such feelings as were produced by natural beauty and grandeur on the Poet's mind.

---

[1] See Prelude, book vi.

[2] Vol. i. p. 16—37.

The "Descriptive Sketches" conclude with some very spirited lines, which show how ardent was the enthusiasm of the writer in favour of liberty, and how sanguine were his hopes, at that time, of a general diffusion of benevolence and happiness from the exertions of those who proclaimed themselves its advocates, and were enlisting the sympathies of France, Europe, and the world in behalf of themselves and their cause. The author dictated the following particulars concerning these two poems.[1]

An Evening Walk.—"The young lady to whom this was addressed was my sister. It was composed at school and during my first two college vacations. There is not an image in it which I have not observed; and, now in my seventy-third year, I recollect the time and place where most of them were noticed. I will confine myself to one instance.

'Waving his hat, the shepherd from the vale
Directs his wandering dog the cliffs to scale;
The dog loud barking mid the glittering rocks,
Hunts where his master points, the intercepted flocks.'

I was an eye-witness of this for the first time while crossing the pass of Dunmail Raise. Upon second thought, I will mention another image:

'And fronting the bright west, yon oak entwines
Its darkening boughs and leaves in stronger lines.'

This is feebly and imperfectly expressed, but I recollect distinctly the very spot where this first struck me. It was on the way between Hawkshead and Ambleside, and gave me extreme pleasure. The moment was important in my poetical history; for I date from it my consciousness of the infinite variety of natural appearances which had been unnoticed by the poets of any age or country, so far as I was acquainted with them; and I made a resolution to supply in some degree the deficiency. I could not have been at that time above fourteen years of age. The description of the Swans that follows was taken from the daily opportunities I had of observing their habits, not as confined to the gentleman's park, but in a state of nature. There were two pairs of them that divided the lake of Esthwaite and its in-and-out-flowing streams between them, never trespassing a single yard upon each other's separate domain. They were of the old magnificent species, bearing in beauty and majesty about the same relation to the Thames swan which that does to a goose. It was from the remembrance of these noble creatures I took, thirty years after, the picture of the swan which I have discarded from the poem of "Dion." While I was a school-boy, the late Mr. Curwen introduced a little fleet of these birds, but of the inferior species, to the lake of Windermere. Their principal home was about his own islands; but they sailed about into remote parts of the lake, and either from real or imagined injury done to the adjoining fields, they were got rid of at the request of the farmers and proprietors, but to the great regret of all who had become attached to them from noticing their beauty and quiet habits. I will conclude my notice of this poem by observing that the plan of it has not been confined to a particular walk, or an individual place; a proof (of which I was unconscious at the time) of my unwillingness to submit the poetic spirit to the chains of fact and real circumstance.

---

[1] From MSS. I. F. See above, p. 22. note. They were dictated in 1843.

The country is idealised rather than described in any one of its local aspects."

Descriptive Sketches, 1791–2. — "Much the greatest part of this poem was composed during my walks upon the banks of the Loire, in the years 1791, 1792. I will only notice that the description of the valley filled with mist, beginning 'In solemn shapes,' &c. was taken from that beautiful region, of which the principal features are Lungarn and Sarnen. Nothing that I ever saw in nature left a more delightful impression on my mind than that which I have attempted, alas how feebly! to convey to others in these lines. Those two lakes have always interested me, especially from bearing, in their size and other features, a resemblance to those of the North of England. It is much to be deplored that a district so beautiful should be so unhealthy as it is."

These two poems attracted little public notice, and it was long before they passed through one edition. But one of them arrested the attention of a person who entered the University of Cambridge the same year as Wordsworth left it, and was afterwards associated with him as one of his most intimate friends, Samuel Taylor Coleridge. "During the last year of my residence at Cambridge," says Coleridge[1], "I became acquainted with Mr. Wordsworth's 'Descriptive Sketches,' and seldom, if ever, was the emergence of an original poetic genius above the literary horizon more evidently announced."

In January, 1791, William Wordsworth took his Bachelor of Arts degree, and quitted Cambridge.

---

[1] Biograph. Literar. vol. i. p. 74. ed. 1847.

CHAPTER VIII.

RESIDENCE IN FRANCE.

In the month of May, 1791, William Wordsworth, after four months residence in London, visited his friend Robert Jones at the house of his father, Edward Jones, Esq., Plas-yn-llan, and with him made a pedestrian tour in North Wales.

In a letter[1] from Plas-yn-llan to his friend and fellow collegian William Mathews, he thus writes: —

"*Plas-yn-llan, near Ruthin, Denbighshire,*
June 17. 1791.

"You will see by the date of this letter that I am in Wales, and whether you remember the place of Jones's residence or no, you will immediately conclude that I am with him. I quitted London about three weeks ago, where my time passed in a strange manner, sometimes whirled about by the vortex of its *strenua inertia*, and sometimes thrown by the eddy into a corner of the stream. Think not, however, that I had not many pleasant hours. . . . . My time has been spent since I reached Wales in a very agreeable manner, and Jones and I intend to make a tour through its northern counties,— on foot, as you will easily suppose."

---

[1] I am indebted for these letters to the courtesy of Mrs. Mathews, who, having heard the announcement of the present Memoir, very promptly and liberally placed them at my disposal.

In company with Jones, he saw "the sunsets which give such splendour to the vale of Clwyd;" with him he explored "Snowdon, the chair of Idris, the quiet village of Bethgelert, and visited Menai and the Alpine steeps of Conway, and traced the windings of the wizard stream of the Dee."[1]

One of the scenes which he beheld in this tour — a moonlight night on the top of Snowdon — is described with great splendour of language in the opening of the last book of "The Prelude."[2]

After the completion of this tour in North Wales, Wordsworth writes again, on the 3d of August, from Plas-yn-llan to Mathews, who, it appears, was suffering from low spirits. "I regret much not to have been made acquainted with your wish to have employed your vacation in a pedestrian tour, both on your account, as it would have contributed greatly to exhilarate your spirits, and on mine, as we should have gained much from the addition of your society. Such an excursion would have served like an Aurora Borealis to gild your long Lapland night of melancholy."

About this time Wordsworth was urged by some of his relatives to take holy orders. Writing from Cambridge, September 23d, to Mathews, he says, "I quitted Wales on a summons from Mr. Robinson, a gentleman you most likely have heard me speak of, respecting my going into orders and taking a curacy at Harwich; which curacy he considered as introductory to the living. I thought it was best to pay my respects to him in person, to inform him that I am not of age for ordination." He adds, that he intends to "remain at Cambridge till the University fills," that is, till the middle of October; and on the 23d of November he writes to Mathews from Brighton, informing him that he is on his "way to Orleans, where he purposes to pass the winter."

---

[1] Dedication of Descriptive Sketches, vol. i. p. 16.

[2] P. 353.

He set out on this journey without any companion; and at that time he had a very imperfect acquaintance with the French language. France was then in a state of revolution. In November, 1791, the month when he landed in France, the National Assembly met; the party of Madame Roland and the Brissotins were in the ascendant; the war of La Vendée was raging; the army was in favour of a constitutional monarchy; Dumourier was Minister of the Exterior; a German army was hovering on the French frontier; popular sedition was fomented by the Girondists in order to intimidate the government and overawe the crown. In the following year, 1792, the sanguinary epoch of the Revolution commenced; committees of public safety struck terror into the hearts of thousands; the king was thrown into the prison of the Temple; the massacres of September, perpetrated by Danton and his associates to daunt the invading army and its adherents, deluged Paris with blood; the convention was constituted; monarchy was abolished; a rupture ensued between the Gironde and the Montagne; Robespierre arose; Deism was dominant; the influence of Brissot and of the Girondists was on the decline, and in a short time they were about to fall victims to the power which they themselves had created.

Such is a brief outline of the public events which took place while William Wordsworth was in France.

The feelings of enthusiasm with which he entered that country and hailed the rising Revolution have been already described. He ardently hoped and confidently expected that a new era of liberty and happiness was about to dawn upon the world. In his imagination

> "Before him shone a glorious world,
> Fresh as a banner bright, unfurled
> To music suddenly:
> He looked upon the hills and plains,
> And seemed as if let loose from chains
> To live at liberty."[1]

All ancient abuses were to be swept away; and a golden age of universal peace was about to succeed in its place:

> "Bliss was it in that dawn to be *alive*,
> But to be *young* was very heaven!"[2]

He passed a few days at Paris; listened to the harangues in the National Assembly and at the club of the Jacobins; gathered up a stone as a relic from the ruins of the Bastille; and

> "Became a patriot, and his heart was all
> Given to the people, and his love was theirs."[3]

From Paris he directed his course to Orleans, where he became intimately acquainted with the republican general Beaupuis, whom he has described with ardent affection and poetic fire in his autobiographical work, as a philosopher, patriot, and soldier, — a modern Dion. He accompanied him in frequent walks by the banks of the Loire, and among the woods near

---

[1] Vol. ii. p. 121.; see also Prelude, p. 250. 267. 276.

[2] Prelude, p. 299.

[3] Prelude, p. 245.

Orleans; and they discoursed on systems of state polity, and on the prospects of society, and the measures to be adopted for the amelioration of the condition of the poor. The famished girl[1] leading the lean heifer by a cord along the lane, furnished the French soldier with a theme for descanting on the aims of those who had entered on the career of revolution, with full conviction that they were engaging in a righteous cause; and the story of the youthful lovers, Vaudracour and Julia, supplied food for sorrow and indignation, which would not remain inactive, but grasped the sword, and cried for revenge.[2] At length this courageous soldier and philosopher, Beaupuis,

> "perished fighting in supreme command,
> Upon the borders of the unhappy Loire."[3]

√ Wordsworth's condition in France was a very critical one: he was an orphan, young, inexperienced, impetuous, enthusiastic, with no friendly voice to guide him, in a foreign country, and that country in a state of revolution; and this revolution, it must be remembered, had not only taken up arms against the monarchy and other ancient institutions, but had declared war against Christianity. The most licentious theories were propounded; all restraints were broken; libertinism was law. He was encompassed with strong temptations; and although it is not the design of the present work to chronicle the events of his life except so far as they illustrate his writings, yet I could not pass over this period of it without noticing the dangers which surround those who in an ardent emotion of enthusiasm put themselves in a position of peril without due consideration of the circumstances which ought to regulate their practice.

---

[1] Prelude, p. 260.

[2] Vol. i. p. 244—253.

[3] Prelude, p. 257.

Early in the spring of 1792, William Wordsworth had quitted Orleans for Blois, from which he writes to his friend Mathews as follows, on May 17th.

"The horrors excited by the relation of the events consequent upon the commencement of hostilities is general. Not but that there are some men who felt a gloomy satisfaction from a measure which seemed to put the patriot army out of a possibility of success. An ignominious flight, the massacre of their general, a dance performed with savage joy round his burning body, the murder of six prisoners, are events which would have arrested the attention of the reader of the annals of Morocco."

He then expresses his fear that the patriot army would be routed by the invaders. But "suppose," he adds, "that the German army is at the gates of Paris, what will be the consequence? It will be impossible for it to make any material alterations in the constitution; impossible to reinstate the clergy in its ancient guilty splendour; impossible to restore an existence to the noblesse similar to that it before enjoyed; impossible to add much to the authority of the king. Yet there are in France some (millions ?) — I speak without exaggeration — who expect that this will take place."

In the autumn of 1792 he left the banks of the Loire, and bent his steps toward Paris, which he reached a month after the horrible massacre of September. The king had been dethroned, and lay in prison with his wife and children. France was a republic. Wordsworth visited the dungeon, and the palace, and the Place de Carrousel, where

"so late had lain
The dead upon the dying heaped."[1]

He describes the awe which he felt by night in the high, dark, lonely chamber in which he lodged, when he thought of these scenes of carnage, until he seemed

"to hear a voice that cried,
To the whole city, 'sleep no more.'"[2]

These scenes made so deep an impression upon him, that for many years afterwards they haunted his dreams. In his sleep he often imagined himself pleading for the life of his friends or his own before the savage tribunal which professed to uphold law, to maintain peace, and to vindicate the rights of man; and felt no compunction or commiseration in shedding innocent blood.

At Paris his feelings were still more disturbed by the abortive issue of Louvet's denunciation of Robespierre: he began to forebode the commencement of the Reign of Terror; he was paralysed with sorrow and dismay, and stung with disappointment, that no paramount spirit had emerged to abash the impious crests of the leaders of "the atheist crew," and "to quell outrage and bloody power," and to "clear a passage for just government, and leave a solid birthright to the state."

Yet he was rivetted to the spot by a mysterious spell. He longed to remain at Paris. But, happily for him, circumstances obliged him to return to England. If he had remained longer in the French capital, he would, in all probability, have fallen a victim among the Brissotins, with whom he was intimately connected, and who were cut off by their rivals, the Jacobins, at the close of the following May. Reluctantly he tore himself from Paris; but before a few months had elapsed, he acknowledged that in so doing he had been rescued "by the gracious Providence of heaven."[1]

---

[1] Prelude, p. 269.

[2] Ibid. p. 270.

He returned to England at the close of 1792. His brother Richard was then settled as a solicitor in London; John was returning from the Azores; Christopher was at Trinity College, Cambridge, to which he had been sent by his uncle Crackanthorpe. "William," says his sister, in a letter bearing date 22d December, 1792, and written from the house of Dr. Cookson, at Forncett, "is in London; he writes to me regularly, and is a most affectionate brother."

---

[1] Prelude, p. 276.

CHAPTER IX.

FEELINGS AND OPINIONS ON RETURNING FROM FRANCE TO ENGLAND.—CHOICE OF PROFESSION.

It has already been recorded, that some of Wordsworth's relations were desirous that he should take holy orders in the Church of England; and it appears from some of his letters at this period, that their wishes had much weight with him, and that he now entertained the design of qualifying himself for the clerical profession.

But there were many impediments in the way of the accomplishment of this plan. The first and foremost was the state of his own mind. He had embarked in the cause of the French Revolution with eager enthusiasm and sanguine expectations. The course which events had now taken in that country was such as to damp his ardour and check his aspirations. But he could not as yet prevail upon himself to abandon his political theory. He clung to it with unflinching tenacity. And yet the crimes of which the professed partisans of liberty had been guilty, and were still perpetrating in her name, shook his faith in the existence of human virtue, and almost compelled him to sit down in misanthropic sadness and sullen despair.

A pamphlet which he wrote on his return to England, but never published, entitled "A Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff on the political Principles contained in an

Appendix to one of his Lordship's recent Sermons," exhibits the state of his mind at that time. The sentiments avowed in it are republican. He declares himself an enemy to an hereditary monarchy and an hereditary peerage, and to all social privileges and distinctions, except such as are conferred by the elective voice of the people. He expresses a deep feeling of sorrow and commiseration for the wrongs suffered by human nature under existing governments; and, having fixed his mind on these melancholy results, and brooding upon them, he identified monarchy with its abuses, and looked for a correction of them all to the unexplored Utopia of democracy.

Yet feeling as he did very strongly on these points, he abhorred violence. He shrunk with execration from the inhuman means which some, whose aims he admired, had adopted, and were still employing, for attaining their ends. In one of his letters to his friend Mathews, he thus speaks: "I disapprove of monarchical and aristocratical governments, however modified. Hereditary distinctions, and privileged orders of every species, I think, must necessarily counteract the progress of human improvement. Hence it follows, that I am not among the admirers of the British constitution. I conceive that a more excellent system of civil policy might be established among us; yet in my ardour to attain the goal, I do not forget the nature of the ground where the race is to be run. The destruction of those institutions which I condemn, appears to me to be hastening on too rapidly. *I recoil from the very idea of a revolution.* I am a determined enemy to every species of violence. I see no connection, but what the obstinacy of pride and ignorance renders necessary, between justice and the sword, — between reason and bonds. I deplore the miserable condition of the French, and think that *we* can only be guarded from the same scourge by the undaunted efforts of good men. . . . . I severely condemn all inflammatory addresses to the passions of men. I know that the multitude walk in darkness. I would put into each man's hands a lantern, to guide him; and not have him to set out upon his journey depending for illumination on abortive flashes of lightning, or the coruscations of transitory meteors."

Such were his sentiments. It is evident that whatever sympathy he might meet with in his theory, he would find little co-operation in practice. Hence, he was in the condition of one who sees his fairest expectations blighted, and his brightest visions melting away. His distress consequent on his disappointment was proportionate to the confidence with which he looked forward to the realisation of his hopes.

Another circumstance gave a severe shock to his moral being. Hitherto his own country had remained neuter. England had looked on the French Revolution with suspicion and uneasiness, but had taken no part in the struggle. But after the death of the King of France, on January 21st, 1793, the case was altered. She would not maintain amicable relation with a regicide republic, and made preparations for war with France.

At that time, the summer of 1793, Wordsworth was in the Isle of Wight with a friend, Mr. William Calvert. Night after night he listened to the cannon fired at sunset from Portsmouth; and his mind was filled with gloomy forebodings with respect to the issue for which the fleet was there being equipped[1]: —

> "Each evening, pacing by the still sea-shore,
> A monitory sound that never failed, —
> The sunset cannon. While the orb went down
> In the tranquillity of nature, came
> That voice, ill requiem! seldom heard by me
> Without a spirit overcast by dark
> Imaginations, sense of woes to come,
> Sorrow for human kind, and pain of heart."[2]

After leaving the Isle of Wight, Wordsworth spent two days in wandering on foot over the dreary waste of Salisbury Plain, and thence proceeded by Bristol and Tintern up the Wye, and so to North Wales. On Salisbury Plain he commenced the poem which *once* bore the name of the plain where the scene is laid, but was *afterwards* published in part under the title of the "Female Vagrant," and finally under that of "Guilt and Sorrow."[3]

It is composed with great vigour, abundantly sufficient to prove to the author and his friends, that he would be justified in devoting himself to poetry as a profession. At the same time, it is impressed with a character of sadness congenial to the state of his own mind at that time.

He had now completed his twenty-third year, and was of an age to receive holy orders. But he was not prepared for such a step. His mind had been disturbed by public affairs, and as yet it had not settled down in a state of repose. He had no fixed place of residence. He travelled from spot to spot, paying visits to his friends, particularly to Robert Jones, where he spent a great part of the summer. In the beginning of 1794, the month of February, he was at Millhouse, Halifax, residing with Mr. W. Rawson, who had married Wordsworth's cousin, Miss Threlkeld, by whom Dorothy Wordsworth was brought up. "My sister," he says, in a letter to Mathews, dated February 17th, 1794, "is under the same roof with me; indeed, it was to see her that I came into this country. I have been doing nothing, and still continue to do nothing. What is to become of me I know not." He announces his resolve *not* to take orders; and "as for the law, I have neither strength of mind, purse, or constitution, to engage in that pursuit."

---

[1] Prelude, p. 278. 280. 302. 304.

[2] Prelude, p. 280.; see also the prefatory notice to "Guilt and Sorrow," vol. i. p. 40.

[3] Vol. i. p. 40—63.

His sister thus writes to a friend, soon after this visit: "After having enjoyed the company of my brother William at Halifax, we set forward by coach towards Whitehaven, and thence to Kendal. I walked, with my brother at my side, from Kendal to Grasmere, eighteen miles, and afterwards from Grasmere to Keswick, fifteen miles, through the most delightful country that was ever seen. We are now at a farm-house, about half a mile from Keswick. When I came, I intended to stay only a few days; but the country is so delightful, and, above all, I have so full an enjoyment of my brother's company, that I have determined to stay a few weeks longer. After I leave Windybrow" (this is the name of the farm-house), "I shall proceed to Whitehaven."

In May, 1794, William Wordsworth was at Whitehaven, at his uncle's, Mr. Richard Wordsworth's; and he then proposes to his friend Mathews, who was resident in London, that they should set on foot a monthly political and literary Miscellany, to which, he says, "he would communicate critical remarks on poetry, the arts of painting, gardening, &c., besides essays on morals and politics." "I am at present," he adds, "nearly at leisure — I say *nearly*, for I am *not quite* so, as I am correcting, and considerably adding to, those poems which I published in your absence" ("The Evening Walk," and "Descriptive Sketches"). "It was with great reluctance that I sent those two little works into the world in so imperfect a state. But as I had done nothing by which to distinguish myself at the university, I thought these little things might show that I *could* do something. They have been treated with unmerited contempt by some of the periodicals, and others have spoken in higher terms of them than they deserve."

In June, 1794, writing to the same friend from Whitehaven, he furnishes him with a prospectus of the proposed periodical, which he suggests should be called "The Philanthropist, a monthly Miscellany." The political principles of this publication were to have been republican, but not revolutionary.

To turn for a moment to France. "Robespierre," says Wordsworth[1], "was one of the *vainest* of men; and from this passion, and from that *cowardice* which naturally connects itself with it, flowed the horrors of his administration." In July, 1794, Robespierre fell; and with his fall a new hope gleamed upon Wordsworth's mind. The effect of the intelligence, which met him as he crossed the sands of Ulverstone, is described in rapturous accents in his biographical poem: —

---

[1] Letter to a friend of Burns, p. 34.

> "'Come, now, ye golden times,'
> Said I, forth-pouring on those open sands
> A hymn of triumph: 'as the Morning comes
> From out the bosom of the Night, come ye:
> Thus far our trust is verified; behold!
> They who with clumsy desperation brought
> A river of Blood, and preached that nothing else
> Could cleanse the Augean stable, by the might
> Of their own helper have been swept away.'"[1]

But this ecstasy was of short duration: the cloud which hung over France became as dense and dark as before; and his sadness was not relieved, but pressed with a wearier weight upon his soul. His personal circumstances also at this time were very distressing.

The attempt to recover the debt due to his father's estate was as yet unattended with success. Years were passing by, and he had no fixed profession. His relatives were disappointed and displeased, that with his intellectual powers, he had made no effort to attain the literary honours and rewards which were within his reach at the university. They thought that he had wasted his time in continental rambles, when he ought to have been qualifying himself for a profession, and that he had recklessly scorned their advice, and marred his own fortunes; and they looked upon him with coldness. The proposal, also, for "The Philanthropist" failed. He was driven to look about for other means of livelihood.

In this difficult emergency, he was led to hope for a maintenance by contributing to a London newspaper.

---

[1] Prelude, p. 291.

Writing from Keswick on November 7th, 1794, he announces to his friend Mathews, who *was* so employed, his desire and intention of coming to London for that purpose, and requests him to procure for him a similar engagement. "You say a newspaper would be glad of me. Do you think you could insure me employment in that way, on terms similar to your own? I mean, also, in an opposition paper, for I cannot abet, in the smallest degree, the measures pursued by the present ministry. They are already so deeply advanced in iniquity, that, like Macbeth, they cannot retreat. When I express myself in this manner, I am far from reprobating those whose sentiments differ from my own; I know that many good men are persuaded of the expediency of the present war." He then turns to domestic matters: "You would probably see that my brother[1] has been honoured with two college declamation prizes. This goes towards a fellowship, which I hope he will obtain, and am sure he will merit. He is a lad of talents, and industrious withal. This same industry is a good old Roman quality, and nothing is to be done without it."

While waiting for a reply to his inquiry, whether an opening might be found for him in connection with the London newspaper press, he was engaged in attendance upon a young sick friend. This illness was protracted for many months, and threatened to be fatal. "My friend," he writes[2], "has every symptom of a confirmed consumption, and I cannot think of quitting him in his present debilitated state." And on the following January 7th (1795), he writes from

---

[1] Christopher, then an under-graduate of Trinity College, Cambridge, and subsequently Master of that College.

[2] Letter to Mathews, Nov. 7. 1794.

Penrith (where he was in lodgings at Mrs. Sowerby's, at the sign of the Robin Hood), "I have been here for some time. I am still much engaged with my sick friend; and sorry am I to add that he worsens daily . . he is barely alive . ."

In a short time after this letter was written his young friend expired; and it was found, on opening his will, that he had bequeathed to his friend Wordsworth, who nursed him in his sickness, the sum of Nine hundred pounds.

The reader who is acquainted with Wordsworth's Poems will not need to be informed, that this young man was RAISLEY CALVERT.

> "CALVERT! it must not be unheard by them
> Who may respect my name, that I to thee
> Owe many years of early liberty.
> This care was thine, when sickness did condemn
> Thy youth to hopeless wasting root and stem,
> That I, if frugal and severe, might stray
> Where'er I liked, and finally array
> My temples with the Muses' diadem.
> Hence, if in freedom I have loved the truth,
> If there be aught of pure, or good, or great
> In my past verse, or shall be in the lays
> Of highest mood which now I meditate,
> It gladdens me, O worthy short-lived youth,
> To think how much of this will be thy praise."[1]

This bequest was devised on public as well as private grounds. Raisley Calvert, son of R. Calvert, Esq., steward to the Duke of Norfolk, was no poet himself, but he was endued with the wisdom of the heart, and with a certain discernment and prescience, which seem to be not unfrequently granted to unworldly men when about to leave this world; and he entertained a firm persuasion, that Wordsworth, if possessed of independent means, would benefit mankind by his writings. He was resolved to do what he could to secure him a competency; and in bequeathing the legacy, which has been mentioned, he had a strong belief, that he was not only promoting the happiness of his friend, but consulting the interests of society.

---

[1] Vol. ii. p. 278.; see also the affectionate Tribute to his Memory, in the "Prelude," p. 368.

This event, occurring at this critical epoch of Wordsworth's life, was most providential. It rescued him from a danger, on the brink of which he was standing — the danger of depending for his livelihood on the newspaper press. And it may be regarded also in a public light, as affecting the interests of literature, and the welfare not only of England and the present century, but of future ages and distant lands. If it had not been for Raisley Calvert, or rather for the spirit of love moving in his heart, Wordsworth's best days might have been spent in writing leading articles for "The Courier;" and the world would never have seen "The Excursion."

The mind dwells with delight on such acts as these, leading to such consequences; and it will not be irrelevant here to anticipate a little, and to insert some paragraphs from a letter written ten years after Calvert's death, by Wordsworth to his friend Sir George Beaumont, as it affords striking evidence of the greatness of the benefit conferred upon him, and of his own gratitude for it. It also records some other biographical particulars, which may well be introduced here.

To Sir George Beaumont, Bart.

" *Grasmere, Feb. 20th,* 1805.

" My dear Friend,

" My father, who was an attorney of considerable eminence, died intestate, when we were children; and the chief part of his personal property after his decease was expended in an unsuccessful attempt to compel the late Lord Lonsdale to pay a debt of about 5000*l.* to my father's estate. Enough, however, was scraped together to educate us all in different ways. I, the second son, was sent to college with a view to the profession of the church or law; into one of which I should have been forced by necessity, had not a friend left me 900*l.* This bequest was from a young man with whom, though I call him friend, I had had but little connection; and the act was done entirely from a confidence on his part that I had powers and attainments which might be of use to mankind. This I have mentioned, because it was his due, and I thought the fact would give you pleasure. Upon the interest of the 900*l.*, 400*l.* being laid out in annuity, with 200*l.* deducted from the principal, and 100*l.* a legacy to my sister, and a 100*l.* more which the " Lyrical Ballads " have brought me, my sister and I contrived to live seven years, nearly eight. Lord Lonsdale then died, and the present Lord Lowther paid to my father's estate 8500*l.* Of this sum I believe 1800*l.* apiece will come to my sister and myself; at least, would have come: but 3000*l.* was lent out to our poor brother[1], I mean taken from the whole sum, which was about 1200*l.* more than his share, which 1200*l.* belonged to my sister and me. This

---

[1] **Captain John Wordsworth, who perished by shipwreck a short time before the date of this letter.**

1200*l.* we freely lent him: whether it was insured or no, I do not know; but I dare say it will prove to be the case; we did not however stipulate for its being insured. But you shall faithfully know all particulars as soon as I have learned them."

* * * * *

Another circumstance, no less providential in Wordsworth's life, must be recorded here. His feelings at the dawn of the French Revolution have been described. We have seen also the distress into which he was thrown by the savage acts that polluted a cause which he regarded as the cause of heaven. His mind was whirled round and round in a vortex of doubt, and appeared to be almost on the point of sinking into a gulph of despair. Not that he ever lapsed into scepticism. No! His early education, his love of the glories and beauties of creation protected him from any approach to that. Yet at this period of his life, his religious opinions were not very clearly defined. He had too high an opinion of the sufficiency of the human will, and too sanguine a hope of unlimited benefits to be conferred on society by the human intellect. He had a good deal of Stoical pride, mingled with not a little of Pelagian self-confidence. Having an inadequate perception of the necessity of divine grace, he placed his hopes where they could not stand; and did not place them, where, if placed, they could not fall. He sought for ideal perfectibility where he could not but meet with real frailty, and did not look for peace where alone it could be found. Hence his mind was ill at ease.

It was at this juncture that he was restored to the society of her, who was given him by Providence to be the companion of his future life — his "sole Sister." She was nearly two years younger than he was, endued with tender sensibility, with an exquisite perception of beauty, with a retentive recollection of what she saw, with a felicitous tact in discerning, and admirable skill in delineating natural objects with graphic accuracy and vivid gracefulness. He had addressed his "Descriptive Sketches" to her: his poetical name was associated with hers. She was his companion in his walks and in his hours of retirement. She cheered his spirits, and beguiled him of his sadness; she calmed and soothed him, and restored him to himself.

> "Then it was —
> Thanks to the bounteous Giver of all good —
> That the beloved sister, in whose sight
> Those days were passed . . . .
> Maintained for me a saving intercourse
> With my true self."[1]

In the melancholy picture of one of the characters in "The Excursion," Wordsworth has described his own buoyant hopes and subsequent depression during this period; and it was due mainly to the influence of his sister on his mind, that he did not display in his own person those features of sadness which he has portrayed with so much feeling in that poem in the picture of "the Solitary." She weaned him from contemporary politics, and won him to poetic beauty and truth.

> "She, in the midst of all, preserved him still
> A Poet; made him seek beneath that name,
> And that alone, his office upon earth."[2]

---

[1] Prelude, p. 309.

[2] Ibid. p. 309.

It would be an omission in this part of our narrative, if the reader's attention were not invited here to Mr. Wordsworth's *mature* opinions on sudden political changes. His sentiments on this subject are expressed with deep and solemn earnestness in his later poems, especially in his sonnets dedicated to Liberty and Order.

"Blest Statesman He, whose Mind's unselfish will
Leaves him at ease among grand thoughts: whose eye
Sees that, apart from magnanimity,
Wisdom exists not; nor the humbler skill
Of Prudence, disentangling good and ill
With patient care. What tho' assaults run high,
They daunt not him who holds his ministry,
Resolute, at all hazards, to fulfil
Its duties; — prompt to move, but firm to wait, —
Knowing, things rashly sought are rarely found;
That, for the functions of an ancient State —
Strong by her charters, free because imbound,
Servant of Providence, not slave of Fate —
Perilous is sweeping change, all chance unsound."

"Who ponders National events shall find
An awful balancing of loss and gain,
Joy based on sorrow, good with ill combined,
And proud deliverance issuing out of pain
And direful throes; as if the All-ruling Mind,
With whose perfection it consists to ordain
Volcanic burst, earthquake, and hurricane,
Dealt in like sort with feeble human kind
By laws immutable. But woe for him
Who thus deceived shall lend an eager hand
To social havoc. Is not Conscience ours,
And Truth, whose eye guilt only can make dim;
And Will, whose office, by divine command,
Is to control and check disordered Powers?"

"Long-favoured England! be not thou misled
By monstrous theories of alien growth,
Lest alien frenzy seize thee, waxing wroth,
Self-smitten till thy garments reek dyed red
With thy own blood, which tears in torrents shed
Fail to wash out, tears flowing ere thy troth
Be plighted, not to ease but sullen sloth,
Or wan despair — the ghost of false hope fled
Into a shameful grave. Among thy youth,
My Country! if such warning be held dear,
Then shall a Veteran's heart be thrilled with joy,
One who would gather from eternal truth,
For time and season, rules that work to cheer —
Not scourge, to save the People — not destroy."[1]

These warnings will come with more force from one who was through life one of the most devoted friends of true liberty, and in his earlier days was beguiled by what is sometimes called liberty, but is licentiousness, and therefore tends, not to emancipate, but enslave mankind, as he himself says: —

"He saw upon the soil of France
Rash Polity begin her maniac dance,
Foundations broken up, the deeps run wild,
Nor grieved to see (himself not unbeguiled) —
Woke from the dream, the dreamer to upbraid,
And learn how sanguine expectations fade
When novel trusts by folly are betrayed, —
To see Presumption, turning pale, refrain
From further havoc, but repent in vain, —
Good aims lie down, and perish in the road
Where guilt had urged them on with ceaseless goad,

---

[1] Vol. iv. p. 259, 260.

Proofs thickening round her that on public ends
Domestic virtue vitally depends,
That civic strife can turn the happiest hearth
Into a grievous sore of self-tormenting earth."[1]

But we must return to our narrative.

---

[1] The Warning, vol. iv. p. 239.

CHAPTER X.

RACEDOWN.

In the autumn of 1795, William Wordsworth and his sister were settled at Racedown Lodge, near Crewkerne, in Dorsetshire. The house in which they lived belonged to Mr. Pinney, of Bristol, a friend of Mr. Basil Montagu. " The country," says his sister, in one of her letters, " is delightful; we have charming walks, a good garden, a pleasant house," — which was pretty well stocked with books. Here they employed themselves industriously in reading, — " if reading can ever deserve the name of industry," says Wordsworth in a letter to his friend Mathews[1], — writing, and gardening. " My brother," she says, " handles the spade with great dexterity." " She herself," he says, " had gone through half of Davila, and yesterday we began Ariosto." [1] The place was very retired, with little or no society, and a post only once a week. Writing afterwards to a friend in 1799, she says, " I think Racedown is the place dearest to my recollections upon the whole surface of the island; it was the first home I had." She speaks with raptures of the " lovely meadows above the tops of the combs, and the scenery on Pilsden, Lewisden, and Blackdown-hill, and the view of the sea from Lambert's Castle."

---

[1] Dated Racedown, March 21. [1796.]

In a letter to his friend Wrangham, on the 20th November of this year, he sends him certain poetical Imitations of JUVENAL, in which he was then occupied; and it appears that he and his correspondent had undertaken to compose and publish conjointly a volume of such imitations. These specimens exhibit poetical vigour, combined with no little asperity and rancour against the abuses of the time, and the vices of the ruling powers, and the fashionable corruptions of aristocratical society. He appears to have been engaged in this paraphrase of the Roman satirist till the following spring. But his labours were not brought to a close; and, ere many years had passed, he regretted the time spent upon the work. Application being then made to him for permission to publish what he had written of these imitations, he replied as follows:—

"*Nov.* 7. 1806.

"I have long since come to a fixed resolution to steer clear of personal satire; in fact, I never will have any thing to do with it as far as concerns the *private* vices of individuals on any account. With respect to public delinquents or offenders, I will not say the same; though I should be slow to meddle even with these. This is a rule which I have laid down for myself, and shall rigidly adhere to; though I do not in all cases blame those who think and act differently.

"It will therefore follow, that I cannot lend any assistance to your proposed publication. The verses which you have of mine, I should wish to be destroyed; I have no copy of them myself, at least none that I can find. I would most willingly give them up to you, fame, profit, and everything, if I thought either true fame or profit could arise out of them."

His next poetical employment was of a very different nature. He had completed his "Salisbury Plain," or "Guilt and Sorrow," and on October 24th, 1796, his sister describes him as "now ardent in the composition of a tragedy," the "BORDERERS." The subject of this play had been probably suggested to him in his residence at Penrith and on the Scottish border, where are so many castles and other monuments connected with the age to which this drama belongs — the time of Henry III.

Though written in 1795–6, it did not see the light till near fifty years afterwards. It was first published in 1842. In the year 1843, he made the following observations in speaking with respect to it[1]:—

"*The Borderers; a Tragedy.*—Of this dramatic work I have little to say in addition to the short printed note which will be found attached to it. It was composed at Racedown in Dorsetshire, during the latter part of the year 1795, and in the course of the following year. Had it been the work of a later period of life, it would have been different in some respects from what it is now. The plot would have been something more complete, and a greater variety of characters introduced, to relieve the mind from the pressure of incidents so mournful; the manners also would have been more attended to. My care was almost exclusively given to the passions and the characters, and the positions in which the persons in the drama stood relatively to each other, that the reader (for I never thought of the stage at the time it was written) might be moved, and to a degree instructed, by lights penetrating somewhat into the depths of our nature. In this endeavour, I cannot think, upon a very late review, that I have failed. As to the scene and period of action, little more was required for my purpose than the absence of established law and government, so that the agents might be at liberty to act on their own impulses. Nevertheless, I do remember, that having a wish to colour the manners in some degree from local history more than my knowledge enabled me to do, I read Redpath's 'History of the Borders,' but found there nothing to my purpose. I once made an observation to Sir W. Scott, in which he concurred, that it was difficult to conceive how so dull a book could be written on such a subject. Much about the same time, but a little after, Coleridge was employed in writing his tragedy of 'Remorse;' and it happened soon after that, through one of the Mr. Pooles, Mr. Knight, the actor, heard that we had been engaged in writing plays, and, upon his suggestion, mine was curtailed, and (I believe, with Coleridge's) was offered to Mr. Harris, manager of Covent Garden. For myself, I had no hope, nor even a wish (though a successful play would in the then state of my finances have been a most welcome piece of good fortune), that he should accept my performance; so that I incurred no disappointment when the piece was *judiciously* returned as not calculated for the stage. In this judgment I entirely concurred; and had it been otherwise, it was so natural for me to shrink from public notice, that any hope I might have had of success would not have reconciled me altogether to such an exhibition. Mr. C.'s play was, as is well known, brought forward several years after, through the kindness of Mr. Sheridan. In conclusion, I may observe, that while I was composing this play, I wrote a short essay, illustrative of that constitution and those tendencies of human nature, which make the apparently *motiveless* actions of bad men intelligible to careful observers. This was partly done with reference to the character of Oswald, and his persevering endeavour to lead the man he disliked into so heinous a crime; but still more to preserve in my distinct remembrance what I had observed of transitions in character, and the reflections I had been led to make, during the time I was a witness of the changes through which the French Revolution passed."

---

[1] From MSS. I. F.

It was in the month of June, 1797, that SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE first came to Racedown.

He was two years and a half younger than Wordsworth. He was admitted at Jesus College, Cambridge, in February, 1791, and quitted it at the close of 1794. On the 4th October of the following year he was married at Bristol, and went to reside at Clevedon. On the 1st March, 1796, he commenced the publication of "The Watchman," which continued to appear periodically till the 13th May following. His first volume of poems was published by Mr. Cottle, at Bristol, in the beginning of April, 1796.

The first impression made by the appearance of Mr. Coleridge is thus described by Miss Wordsworth, in a letter to a friend who had left Racedown early in 1797: —

"You had a great loss in not seeing Coleridge.

He is a wonderful man. His conversation teems with soul, mind, and spirit. Then he is so benevolent, so good-tempered and cheerful, and, like William, interests himself so much about every little trifle. At first I thought him very plain, that is, for about three minutes: he is pale, thin, has a wide mouth, thick lips, and not very good teeth, longish, loose-growing, half-curling, rough, black hair" (in both these respects a striking contrast to his friend Wordsworth, who in his youth had beautiful teeth and light brown hair). "But, if you hear him speak for five minutes you think no more of them. His eye is large and full, and not very dark, but grey, such an eye as would receive from a heavy soul the dullest expression; but it speaks every emotion of his animated mind: it has more of 'the poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling' than I ever witnessed. He has fine dark eyebrows, and an overhanging forehead.

"The first thing that was read after he came was William's new poem, 'Ruined Cottage,' with which he was much delighted; and after tea he repeated to us two acts and a half of his tragedy, 'Osorio.' The next morning, William read his tragedy, 'The Borderers.'"[1]

With this description of Coleridge may be compared the picture drawn by Wordsworth of his friend in the poem entitled "Stanzas written in my Pocket Copy of Thomson's Castle of Indolence;" where, after the Poet has delineated himself, his brother bard is thus portrayed: —

---

[1] For another description of Coleridge's personal appearance, and for an account of the best portrait of him — that by Alston, painted at Rome for Mr. Josiah Wade, in 1806, — see Biog. Lit. vol. ii. p. 386. edit. 1847.

"With him there often walked in friendly guise,
Or lay upon the moss by brook or tree,
A noticeable man, with large grey eyes,
And a pale face that seemed undoubtedly
As if a blooming face it ought to be;
Heavy his low-hung lip did oft appear,
Deprest by weight of musing Phantasy;
Profound his forehead was, though not severe.[1]
* * * * *
It was a treat that other man to hear
His music, and to view his imagery.
And, sooth, these two were to each other dear,
No livelier love in such a place could be."

Coleridge, writing at the time of this visit, to his friend Mr. Cottle, thus speaks:—"I am sojourning for a few days at Racedown, Dorset, the mansion of our friend Wordsworth. He admires my tragedy, which gives me great hopes. He has written a tragedy himself. I speak with heartfelt sincerity, and I think unblinded judgment, when I tell you that I feel a little man by his side." And (March, 1798), "When I speak in the terms of admiration due to his intellect, I fear lest these terms should keep out of sight the amiableness of his manners. He has written near twelve hundred lines of blank verse, superior, I hesitate not to aver, to any thing in our language which in any way resembles it."

Coleridge, in 1797, at Stowey, thus describes Miss Wordsworth, in a letter to the same friend. "Wordsworth and his exquisite sister are with me. She is a woman indeed, in mind I mean, and in heart; for her person is such that if you expected to see a pretty woman, you would think her ordinary; if you expected to see an ordinary woman you would think her pretty, but her manners are simple, ardent, impressive. In every motion her innocent soul outbeams so brightly, that who saw her would say 'Guilt was a thing impossible with her.' Her information various; her eye watchful in minutest observation of Nature; and her taste a perfect electrometer."

---

[1] Vol. i. p. 212, 213.
[2] Mr. Cottle's Early Recollections of Coleridge, vol. i. p. 250-2.

The occasional intercourse which the two poets enjoyed at Racedown made them desirous of nearer intimacy; and, in the following month, Wordsworth and his sister moved to another abode, near the village of Nether-Stowey, in Somersetshire, where Coleridge then lived.

CHAPTER XI.

ALFOXDEN.

"Alfoxden near Nether-Stowey, Somersetshire,
August 14. 1797.

" HERE we are," says Miss Wordsworth, in a letter to a friend, bearing the above date, "in a large mansion, in a large park, with seventy head of deer around us. But I must begin with the day of leaving Racedown to pay Coleridge a visit. You know how much we were delighted with the neighbourhood of Stowey." " There is every thing there," she says in a previous letter, 4th July, 1797, " sea, woods wild as fancy ever painted, brooks clear and pebbly as in Cumberland, villages so romantic; and William and I, in a wander by ourselves, found out a sequestered waterfall in a dell formed by steep hills covered with full-grown timber trees. The woods are as fine as those at Lowther, and the country more romantic; it has the character of the less grand parts of the neighbourhood of the lakes." In her next letter (of August 14.), Miss Wordsworth continues: " The evening that I wrote to you, William and I had rambled as far as this house, and pryed into the recesses of our little brook, but without any more fixed thoughts upon it than some dreams of happiness in a little cottage, and passing wishes that such a place might be found out. We spent a fortnight at Coleridge's: in the course of that time we heard that this house was to let, applied for it, and took it. Our principal inducement was Coleridge's society. It was a month yesterday since we came to Alfoxden.

"The house is a large mansion, with furniture enough for a dozen families like ours. There is a very excellent garden, well stocked with vegetables and fruit. The garden is at the end of the house, and our favourite parlour, as at Racedown, looks that way. In front is a little court, with grass plot, gravel walk, and shrubs; the moss roses were in full beauty a month ago. The front of the house is to the south, but it is screened from the sun by a high hill which rises immediately from it. This hill is beautiful, scattered irregularly and abundantly with trees, and topped with fern, which spreads a considerable way down it. The deer dwell here, and sheep, so that we have a living prospect. From the end of the house we have a view of the sea, over a woody meadow-country; and exactly opposite the window where I now sit is an immense wood, whose round top from this point has exactly the appearance of a mighty dome. In some parts of this wood there is an under grove of hollies which are now very beautiful. In a glen at the bottom of the wood is the waterfall of which I spoke, a quarter of a mile from the house. We are three miles from Stowey, and not two miles from the sea. Wherever we turn we have woods, smooth downs, and valleys with small brooks running down them, through green meadows, hardly ever intersected with hedgerows, but scattered over with trees. The hills that cradle these valleys are either covered with fern and bilberries, or oak woods, which are cut for charcoal . . . Walks extend for miles over the hill-tops; the great beauty of which is their wild simplicity: they are perfectly smooth, without rocks.

"The Tor of Glastonbury is before our eyes during more than half of our walk to Stowey; and in the park wherever we go, keeping about fifteen yards above the house, it makes a part of our prospect."

Such was the place in which Wordsworth now commenced his residence, and where he remained for about a year; a period which he describes "as a very pleasant and productive time of his life."

Many of his smaller pieces were composed at Alfoxden, and are descriptive of it and its neighbourhood.

The Night Piece, beginning "The sky is overcast,"[1] was "composed on the road between Nether-Stowey and Alfoxden extempore. I distinctly recollect," he says, in 1834[2], "the very moment I was struck as described, 'he looks up at the clouds.'"

The "Anecdote for Fathers,"[3] showing how children may be betrayed by parents into a habit of telling falsehoods, was suggested in front of the house at Alfoxden. The boy was Basil (a child of Mr. Basil Montagu), who lived under Mr. Wordsworth's care.

The name of Kilve in the poem, "is from a village on the Bristol Channel, about a mile from Alfoxden; and the name of Liswyn Farm was taken from a beautiful spot on the Wye."

In specifying these details, Mr. Wordsworth added the following particulars: —

"Mr. Coleridge, my sister, and I had been visiting the famous John Thelwall, who had taken refuge from politics, after a trial for high treason, with a view to bring up his family by the profits of agriculture, which proved as unfortunate a speculation as that he had fled from. Coleridge and he had been public lecturers, Coleridge mingling with his politics theology, from which the other elocutionist abstained, unless it were for the sake of a sneer. This quondam community of public employment induced Thelwall to visit Coleridge, at Nether-Stowey, where he fell in my way. He really was a man of extraordinary talent, an affectionate husband, and a good father. Though brought up in the City, on a tailor's board, he was truly sensible of the beauty of natural objects. I remember once, when Coleridge, he, and I, were seated upon the turf on the brink of the stream, in the most beautiful part of the most beautiful glen of Alfoxden, Coleridge exclaimed, 'This is a place to reconcile one to all the jarrings and conflicts of the wide world.' 'Nay,' said Thelwall, 'to make one forget them altogether.' The visit of this man to Coleridge was, as I believe Coleridge has related, the occasion of a spy being sent by government to watch our proceedings, which were, I can say with truth, such as the world at large would have thought ludicrously harmless."

---

[1] Vol. ii. p. 95.

[2] MSS. Notes.

[3] Vol. i. p. 164.

In November, 1797, Wordsworth and his sister accompanied Coleridge in a pedestrian tour along the sea-coast to Minehead, thence to Porlock. From Porlock, says Miss Wordsworth, "we kept close to the shore about four miles. Our road lay through wood, rising almost perpendicularly from the sea, with views of the opposite mountains of Wales: thence we came by twilight to Lymmouth, in Devonshire. The next morning we were guided to a valley at the top of one of those immense hills which open at each end to the sea, and is from its rocky appearance called the Valley of Stones. We mounted a cliff at the end of the valley, and looked from it immediately on to the sea."

They were struck by the wild grandeur of this scenery, and returned much gratified by the tour.

On the 20th November, Miss Wordsworth writes, "We have been on another tour: we set out last Monday evening at half-past four. The evening was dark and cloudy; we went eight miles, William and Coleridge employing themselves in laying the plan of a ballad, to be published with some pieces of William's."

Wordsworth refers to these and other rambles in the company of Coleridge, as follows: —

"Beloved Friend!
When looking back, thou seest, in clearer view
Than any liveliest sight of yesterday,
That summer, under whose indulgent skies,
Upon smooth Quantock's airy ridge we roved
Unchecked, or loitered 'mid her sylvan combs:
Thou in bewitching words, with happy heart,
Didst chaunt the vision of that Ancient Man,
The bright-eyed Mariner, and rueful woes
Didst utter of the Lady Christabel;
And I, associate with such labour, steeped
In soft forgetfulness the livelong hours,
Murmuring of him who, joyous hap, was found,
After the perils of his moonlight ride,
Near the loud waterfall; or her who sate
In misery near the miserable Thorn."[1]

Speaking of the poem *We are Seven*[2], he says:

"This was written at Alfoxden in the spring of 1798, under circumstances somewhat remarkable.

---

[1] Prelude, p. 369.

[2] MSS. I.F.

The little girl who is the heroine I met within the area of Goderich Castle in the year 1793.

"In reference to this poem, I will here mention one of the most noticeable facts in my own poetic history, and that of Mr. Coleridge. In the autumn of 1797, he, my sister, and myself, started from Alfoxden pretty late in the afternoon, with a view to visit Linton, and the Valley of Stones near to it; and as our united funds were very small, we agreed to defray the expense of the tour by writing a poem, to be sent to the 'New Monthly Magazine,' set up by Phillips, the bookseller, and edited by Dr. Aikin. Accordingly we set off, and proceeded, along the Quantock Hills, towards Watchet; and in the course of this walk was planned the poem of the 'Ancient Mariner,' founded on a dream, as Mr. Coleridge said, of his friend Mr. Cruikshank. Much the greatest part of the story was Mr. Coleridge's invention; but certain parts I suggested; for example, some crime was to be committed which should bring upon the Old Navigator, as Coleridge afterwards delighted to call him, the spectral persecution, as a consequence of that crime and his own wanderings. I had been reading in Shelvocke's Voyages, a day or two before, that, while doubling Cape Horn, they frequently saw albatrosses in that latitude, the largest sort of seafowl, some extending their wings twelve or thirteen feet. 'Suppose,' said I, 'you represent him as having killed one of these birds on entering the South Sea, and that the tutelary spirits of these regions take upon them to avenge the crime.' The incident was thought fit for the purpose, and adopted accordingly. I also suggested the navigation of the ship by the dead men, but do not recollect that I had anything more to do with the scheme of the poem. The gloss with which it was subsequently accompanied was not thought of by either of us at the time, at least not a hint of it was given to me, and I have no doubt it was a gratuitous after-thought. We began the composition together, on that to me memorable evening: I furnished two or three lines at the beginning of the poem, in particular —

'And listen'd like a three years' child;
The Mariner had his will.'

"These trifling contributions, all but one, which Mr. C. has with unnecessary scrupulosity recorded, slipped out of his mind, as they well might. As we endeavoured to proceed conjointly (I speak of the same evening), our respective manners proved so widely different, that it would have been quite presumptuous in me to do anything but separate from an undertaking upon which I could only have been a clog. We returned after a few days from a delightful tour, of which I have many pleasant, and some of them droll enough, recollections. We returned by Dulverton to Alfoxden. The 'Ancient Mariner' grew and grew till it became too important for our first object, which was limited to our expectation of five pounds; and we began to think of a volume which was to consist, as Mr. Coleridge has told the world, of poems chiefly on supernatural subjects, taken from common life, but looked at, as much as might be, through an imaginative medium. Accordingly I wrote *The Idiot Boy*, *Her Eyes are wild, &c.*, and *We are Seven*, *The Thorn*, and some others. To return to *We are Seven*, the piece that called forth this note. I composed it while walking in the grove at Alfoxden. My friends will not deem it too trifling to relate, that while walking to and fro I composed the last stanza first, having begun with the last line. When it was all but finished, I came in and recited it to Mr. Coleridge and my sister, and said, 'A prefatory stanza must be added, and I should sit down to our little tea-meal with greater pleasure if my task was finished.' I mentioned in substance what I wished to be expressed, and Coleridge immediately threw off the stanza, thus:

'A little child, dear brother Jem.'

I objected to the rhyme, 'dear brother Jem,' as being ludicrous; but we all enjoyed the joke of hitching in our friend James Tobin's name, who was familiarly called Jem. He was the brother of the dramatist. The said Jem got a sight of the 'Lyrical Ballads' as it was going through the press at Bristol, during which time I was residing in that city. One evening he came to me with a grave face, and said, 'Wordsworth, I have seen the volume that Coleridge and you are about to publish. There is one poem in it which I earnestly entreat you will cancel, for, if published, it will make you everlastingly ridiculous.' I answered, that I felt much obliged by the interest he took in my good name as a writer, and begged to know what was the unfortunate piece he alluded to. He said, 'It is called *We are Seven.*' 'Nay,' said I, 'that shall take its chance, however;' and he left me in despair. I have only to add, that in the spring of 1841, I visited Goderich Castle, not having seen that part of the Wye since I met the little girl there in 1793. It would have given me greater pleasure to have found in the neighbouring hamlet traces of one who had interested me so much, but that was impossible, as, unfortunately, I did not even know her name. The ruin, from its position and features, is a most impressive object. I could not but deeply regret that its solemnity was impaired by a fantastic new castle set up on a projection of the same ridge, as if to show how far modern art can go in surpassing all that could be done by antiquity and nature with their united graces, remembrances, and associations."

Among other poems composed about the same time were, *The Thorn ; Goody Blake and Harry Gill ; Her eyes are wild ; Simon Lee ; Expostulation and Reply ; The Tables Turned ; A Whirl-blast ; The Complaint of a Forsaken Indian Woman ; The Last of the Flock ;* and *The Idiot Boy.*

On some of these poems the author communicated the following particulars[1] :—

The Thorn[2] — Alfoxden, 1798 — " arose out of my observing on the ridge of Quantock Hill, on a stormy day, a Thorn, which I had often passed in calm and bright weather without noticing it. I said to myself, cannot I by some invention do as much to make this Thorn prominently an impressive object as the storm has made it to my eyes at this moment ? I began the poem accordingly, and composed it with great rapidity. Sir George Beaumont painted a picture from it, which Wilkie thought his best. He gave it to me; though, when he saw it several times at Rydal Mount afterwards, he said, ' I could make a better, and would like to paint the same subject over again.' The sky in this picture is nobly done, but it reminds one too much of Wilson. The only fault, however, of any consequence, is the female figure, which is too old and decrepit for one likely to frequent an eminence on such a call."

---

[1] MSS. I. F.

[2] Vol. ii. p. 130.

Goody Blake and Harry Gill.[1] —"Written at Alfoxden, 1798. The incident from Dr. Darwin's Zoonomia."

Simon Lee.[2] — "This old man had been huntsman to the Squires of Alfoxden, which, at the time we occupied it, belonged to a minor. The old man's cottage stood on the Common, a little way from the entrance to the Park. But, in 1841, it had disappeared. Many other changes had taken place in the adjoining village, which I could not but notice with a regret more natural than well-considered. Improvements but rarely appear such to those who after long intervals of time revisit places they have had much pleasure in. It is unnecessary to add, the fact was as mentioned in the poem; and I have, after an interval of forty-five years, the image of the old man as fresh before my eyes as if I had seen him yesterday. The expression when the hounds were out, 'I dearly love their voice,' was word for word from his own lips."

Expostulation and Reply.[3] — "This poem is a favourite among the Quakers, as I have learnt on many occasions. It was composed in front of the house at Alfoxden, in the spring of 1798."

The Tables Turned.[4] — "Composed at the same time."

A Whirl-blast from behind the Hill.[5] — "Observed in the holly grove at Alfoxden, where these verses were written in the spring of 1799. I had the pleasure of again seeing, with dear friends[1], this grove in unimpaired beauty forty-one years after."

---

[1] Vol. v. p. 34.
[2] Vol. iv. p. 185.
[3] Vol. iv. p. 179.
[4] Vol. iv. p. 180.
[5] Vol. ii. p. 17.

The Complaint of a forsaken Indian Woman.[2] — "Written at Alfoxden in 1798, where I read Hearne's Journey with great interest. It was composed for the volume of 'Lyrical Ballads.'"

The Last of the Flock.[3] — "Composed at the same time, and for the same purpose. The incident occurred in the village of Holford, close by Alfoxden."

The Idiot Boy.[4]—Alfoxden, 1798. "The last stanza, 'The cocks did crow, and the moon did shine so cold,' was the foundation of the whole. The words were reported to me by my dear friend Thomas Poole; but I have since heard the same reported of other idiots. Let me add, that this long poem was composed in the groves of Alfoxden almost extempore; not a word, I believe, being corrected, though one stanza was omitted. I mention this in gratitude to those happy moments, for, in truth, I never wrote anything with so much glee."

---

[1] Namely, Mrs. Wordsworth, Miss Fenwick, Mr. and Mrs. Quillinan, and Mr. Wm. Wordsworth, May 13. 1841.

[2] Vol. i. p. 226.

[3] Vol. i. p. 228.

[4] Vol. i. p. 253.

CHAPTER XII.

THE TRAGEDY.

In November, 1797, "The Borderers" was completed, and was about to try its fate upon the stage. "William's play," says Miss Wordsworth, 20th November, 1797, "is finished, and sent to the managers of the Covent Garden Theatre. We have not the faintest expectation that it will be accepted." On the 21st December she writes from Bristol, "We have been in London: our business was the play; and the play is rejected. It was sent to one of the principal actors at Covent Garden, who expressed great approbation, and advised William strongly to go to London to make certain alterations." So to London they went together, brother and sister, outside the coach. They stayed three weeks in London. "Coleridge's play," she adds, "is also rejected;" and for this she expresses great sorrow and disappointment.

However, this play of Mr. Coleridge survived to see better days. About twenty years afterwards, it was again presented, under a new title, to the Theatre; and the same drama which was condemned as "Osorio" in 1797, was acted in 1813 to crowded houses, as "The Remorse."[1]

Wordsworth returned to Alfoxden in December, 1797, not dismayed by the rejection of the play. He resumed his poetical labours with animation. "The Ruined Cottage" (which now stands as part of the first book of "The Excursion") was then finished, and the return of spring gave fresh vigour to his powers.

---

[1] See Preface to "The Remorse," 2d edit. Lond. 1813.

"It is the first mild day of March,[1]
Each minute sweeter than before;
The red-breast sings from the tall larch
That stands beside our door."

A joyous invitation to his sister to taste the delights of the season was now composed, and also the "Lines written in Early Spring."[2]

"I heard a thousand blended notes,
While in a grove I sat reclined,
In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
Bring sad thoughts to the mind."

Speaking of these two poems the author gave the following reminiscences.[3]

Lines written in Early Spring, 1798.—"Actually composed while I was sitting by the side of the brook that runs down the *Comb*, in which stands the village of Alford, through the grounds of Alfoxden. It was a chosen resort of mine. The brook fell down a sloping rock, so as to make a waterfall, considerable for that country; and across the pool below had fallen a tree, an ash, if I rightly remember, from which rose, perpendicularly, boughs in search of the light intercepted by the deep shade above. The boughs bore leaves of green, that for want of sunshine had faded into almost lily-white; and from the underside of this natural sylvan bridge depended long and beautiful tresses of ivy, which waved gently in the breeze, that might, poetically speaking, be called the breath of the waterfall. This motion varied, of course, in proportion to the power of water in the brook. When, with dear friends, I revisited this spot, after an interval of more than forty years, this interesting feature of the scene was gone. To the owner of the place I could not but regret that the beauty of that retired part of the grounds had not tempted him to make it more accessible, by a path, not broad or obtrusive, but sufficient for persons who love such scenes to creep along without difficulty."

---

[1] Vol. iv. p. 184. [2] Vol. iv. p. 182. [3] MSS. I. F.

A Character.—" The principal features are taken from that of my friend, Robert Jones."

To my Sister.[1]—" Composed in front of Alfoxden House.

" My little boy-messenger on this occasion was the son of Basil Montagu. The larch mentioned in the first stanza was standing when I revisited the place in May, 1841, more than forty years after. I was disappointed that it had not improved in appearance, as to size, nor had it acquired anything of the majesty of age, which, even though less perhaps than any other tree, the larch sometimes does. A few score yards from this tree grew, when we inhabited Alfoxden, one of the most remarkable beech trees ever seen. The ground sloped both towards and from it. It was of immense size, and threw out arms that struck into the soil like those of the banyan tree, and rose again from it. Two of the branches thus inserted themselves twice, which gave to each the appearance of a serpent moving along by gathering itself up in folds. One of the large boughs of this tree had been torn off by the wind before we left

---

[1] Vol. iv. p. 184.

Alfoxden, but five remained. In 1841, we could barely find the spot where the tree had stood. So remarkable a production of nature could not have been wilfully destroyed."[1]

In January, 1798, Coleridge had been liberated from a ministerial engagement with a Socinian congregation at Shrewsbury, whither he had gone to succeed Mr. Rowe, by the munificence of the Wedgwoods, who settled on him an annuity of 150*l.* "You know," says Coleridge to Wordsworth[2], "that I have accepted the magnificent liberality of Josiah and Thomas Wedgwood. I accepted it on the presumption that I had talents, honesty, and propensities to persevering effort . . . . Of the pleasant ideas which accompanied this unexpected event, it was not the least pleasant, that I should be able to trace the spring and early summer of Alfoxden with *you*, and that wherever *your* after residence may be, it is probable that you will be within the reach of my tether, lengthened as it now is."

On April 12. 1798, Wordsworth writes from Alfoxden to his friend Cottle, "You will be pleased to hear that I have gone on very rapidly adding to my stock of poetry. Do come and let me read it to you under the old trees in the park. We have little more than two months to stay in this place."

In the following summer Wordsworth and his sister made a short tour on the banks of the Wye. "We left Alfoxden on Monday morning, the 26th of June, stayed with Coleridge till the Monday following, then set forth on foot towards Bristol. We were at Cottle's for a week, and thence we went toward the banks of the Wye. We crossed the Severn Ferry, and walked ten miles further to Tintern Abbey, a very beautiful ruin on the Wye. The next morning we walked along the river through Monmouth to Goderich Castle, there slept, and returned the next day to Tintern, thence to Chepstow, and from Chepstow back again in a boat to Tintern, where we slept, and thence back in a small vessel to Bristol.

---

[1] MSS. I. F.

[2] Shrewsbury, Jan. 1798.

"The Wye is a stately and majestic river from its width and depth, but never slow and sluggish; you can always hear its murmur. It travels through a woody country, now varied with cottages and green meadows, and now with huge and fantastic rocks."

The name of TINTERN will suggest to the reader the lines written by Wordsworth, and inscribed with its name.

"Five years have passed, five summers, with the length
Of five long winters, and again I hear
These waters rolling from their mountain springs,
With a soft inland murmur."[1]

The "sensations sweet" due to the scenery of the sylvan Wye will not fail to suggest a feeling of gratitude for the tranquillizing and cheering influence of Nature upon the mind; and the sketch which the Poet draws of his earlier days and youthful emotions, the courageous spirit of independence which breathes in that poem, the tender address which he makes to his "dear, dear sister," and the hopes and desires he expresses for her sake, will not fail to be perused with sober pleasure and pathetic interest. And if, as perhaps will be the case, the reflecting reader should be disposed to think that too much reliance is there expressed on the powers of man's will, leaning on the aid of Nature alone, and independent of those supernatural means which are provided by a gracious providence for the purification of the corruptions, and for a support to the infirmities, of humanity; if he should be persuaded by sound reason, or convinced from personal experience, that the influences of Nature and Nature's works, however effectual and salutary when regarded as creations of divine power, and emanations from the pure source of divine love, are not sufficient to cheer the languid soul in the hours of sickness and of sorrow; if also, as is not improbable, he should be of opinion, that a "worshipper of nature" is in danger of divinizing the creation and of dishonouring the Creator, and that, therefore, some portions of this poem might be perverted to serve the purposes of a popular and pantheistic philosophy, he will remember that the author of the LINES on TINTERN ABBEY, composed also the EVENING VOLUNTARIES, and that he who professes himself an ardent votary of nature, has explained the sense in which he wishes these words to be understood, by saying, that

---

[1] Vol. ii. p. 150.

"By grace divine,
Not otherwise, O Nature, we are thine."[1]

Concerning the production of this poem, the writer himself gave the following information[2]: —

Tintern Abbey, July, 1798. — "No poem of mine was composed under circumstances more pleasant for me to remember than this. I began it upon leaving Tintern, after crossing the Wye, and concluded it just as I was entering Bristol in the evening, after a ramble of four or five days with my sister. Not a line of it was altered, and not any part of it written down till I reached Bristol. It was published almost immediately after in the little volume of which so much has been said in these notes."[1]

---

[1] Vol. iv. p. 126.

[2] MSS. I. F.

About the same time a longer poem was written, but not published till many years afterwards. This was *Peter Bell.* "This tale," says the author[2], "was founded upon an anecdote which I read in a newspaper, of an ass being found hanging his head over a canal in a wretched posture. Upon examination a dead body was found in the water, and proved to be the body of its master. In the woods of Alfoxden I used to take great delight in noticing the habits, tricks, and physiognomy of asses; and I have no doubt that I was thus put upon writing the poem of 'Peter Bell,' out of liking for the creature that is so often dreadfully abused. The countenance, gait, and figure of Peter were taken from a wild rover with whom I walked from Builth, on the river Wye, downwards, nearly as far as the town of Hay. He told me strange stories. It has always been a pleasure to me, through life, to catch at every opportunity that has occurred in my rambles of becoming acquainted with this class of people. The number of Peter's wives was taken from the trespasses, in this way, of a lawless creature who lived in the county of Durham, and used to be attended by many women, sometimes not less than half a dozen, as disorderly as himself; and a story went in the country, that he had been heard to say while they were quarrelling, 'Why can't you be quiet, there's none so many of you.' Benoni, or the child of sorrow, I knew when I was a school-boy. His mother had been deserted by a gentleman in the neighbourhood, she herself being a gentlewoman by birth. The circumstances of her story were told me by my dear old dame, Ann Tyson, who was her confidante. The lady died broken-hearted. The crescent moon, which makes such a figure in the prologue, assumed this character one evening while I was watching its beauty in front of Alfoxden House. I intended this poem for the volume before spoken of, but it was not published for more than twenty years afterwards. The worship of the Methodists, or Ranters, is often heard during the stillness of the summer evening, in the country, with affecting accompaniments of rural beauty. In both the psalmody and voice of the preacher there is, not unfrequently, much solemnity likely to impress the feelings of the rudest characters under favourable circumstances."

---

[1] The "Lyrical Ballads," as first published at Bristol by Cottle.

[2] MSS. I. F.

After the Wye tour, Wordsworth and his sister took up their abode at Bristol, in order that he might be nearer the printer. "William's poems," she says, July 18th, 1798, "are now in the press; they will be out in six weeks;" and on September the 13th they are described as "printed, but not published." They are "in one small volume, without the name of the author; their title is 'Lyrical Ballads, with other Poems.' Cottle has given thirty guineas for William's share of the volume;" that is, for the copyright.

On August 27. they had arrived in London, having passed Oxford and Blenheim.

In a few days the "LYRICAL BALLADS" appeared; and on the 16th September, Wordsworth, his sister, and Mr. Coleridge left Yarmouth for Hamburgh.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE LYRICAL BALLADS.

The "Lyrical Ballads" were published in the autumn of 1798, in one small volume of 210 pages, by Mr. Cottle, at Bristol.[1] This duodecimo contains

---

[1] Its contents are as follows: —

	Page
The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere	1
The Foster Mother's Tale	53
Lines left upon a Seat in a Yew-tree which stands near the Lake of Esthwaite	59
The Nightingale; a conversational Poem	63
The Female Vagrant	69
Goody Blake and Harry Gill	85
Lines written at a small Distance from my House, and sent by my little Boy to the Person to whom they are addressed	95
Simon Lee, the old Huntsman	98
Anecdote for Fathers	105
We are Seven	110
Lines written in early Spring	115
The Thorn	117
The Last of the Flock	133
The Dungeon	139
The Mad Mother	141
The Idiot Boy	149
Lines written near Richmond upon the Thames, at Evening	180
Expostulation and Reply	183
The Tables turned; an Evening Scene on the same Subject	186
Old Man travelling	189
The Complaint of a forsaken Indian Woman	193
The Convict	197
Lines written a few Miles above Tintern Abbey	201

twenty-three poems, of which the first in order is "The Ancient Mariner," by Coleridge; and the last, the "Lines written a few Miles above Tintern Abbey."

The edition consisted of 500 copies; but as the publisher informs us "the sale was so slow, and the severity of most of the reviews so great, that its progress to oblivion seemed to be certain. I parted with the largest proportion of the 500, at a loss, to Mr. Arch, a London bookseller." [1]

Shortly after its publication, Mr. Cottle quitted business and transferred his copyrights to Messrs. Longman. Among these was the copyright of the "Lyrical Ballads." It appeared that in the calculation of the copyrights *this* was valued at *nil.* Mr. Cottle therefore begged it might be returned, which it was, and he presented it to the authors.

It is not the purport of these pages to offer critical disquisitions on the literary merits of these or other productions of Mr. Wordsworth's pen. They have now, for the most part, been long before the world, and have formed the subject of elaborate essays by grave and philosophic writers [2]; and it may be almost said, that we now hear the verdict of posterity upon them.

---

[1] Cottle's Reminiscences, vol. ii. p. 20.

[2] See particularly Coleridge's Biogr. Liter., vol. i. p. 2. 65—79.; vol. ii. p. 1—5. 42—50. 114—170. 181. edit. 1847. Pickering. The following extracts from Coleridge's Biographia Literaria (London, 1847, vol. ii. p. 1.) will be read with interest, and find an appropriate place here: —

"During the first year that Mr. Wordsworth and I were neighbours*, our conversations turned frequently on the two cardinal

---

* In 1797-8, whilst Mr. Coleridge resided at Nether-Stowey, and Mr. Wordsworth at Alfoxden. — ED.

I will only offer a few passing remarks on this volume, the "Lyrical Ballads."

---

points of poetry, the power of exciting the sympathy of the reader by a faithful adherence to the truth of nature, and the power of giving the interest of novelty by the modifying colours of imagination. The sudden charm which accidents of light and shade, which moonlight or sunset diffused over a known and familiar landscape, appeared to represent the practicability of combining both. These are the poetry of nature. The thought suggested itself (to which of us I do not recollect), that a series of poems might be composed of two sorts. In the one the incidents and agents were to be, in part at least, supernatural; and the excellence aimed at was to consist in the interesting of the affections by the dramatic truth of such emotions as would naturally accompany such situations, supposing them real. And real, in this sense, they have been to every human being who, from whatever source of delusion, has at any time believed himself under supernatural agency. For the second class, subjects were to be chosen from ordinary life: the characters and incidents were to be such as will be found in every village and its vicinity, where there is a meditative and feeling mind to seek after them, or to notice them when they present themselves.

"In this idea originated the plan of the 'LYRICAL BALLADS;' in which it was agreed that my endeavours should be directed to persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic; yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith. Mr. Wordsworth, on the other hand, was to propose to himself as his object, to give the charm of novelty to things of every day, and to excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural, by awakening the mind's attention to the lethargy of custom, and directing it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us; an inexhaustible treasure, but for which, in consequence of the film of familiarity and selfish solicitude, we have eyes, yet see not, ears that hear not, and hearts that neither feel nor understand.

"With this view I wrote 'THE ANCIENT MARINER,' and was preparing, among other poems, 'THE DARK LADIE,' and the 'CHRISTABEL,' in which I should have more nearly realised my ideal than I had done in my first attempt. But Mr. Wordsworth's industry had

Among the main causes which retarded its success was the simple and humble nature of the subjects, and, in some few instances, the homely style with which they were treated. Doubtless the popular taste was then in an unhealthy and vicious state. It had been corrupted by an artificial literature, tricked out in gaudy finery, and speaking in unnatural language. The world was dazzled by tinsel imagery, and deluded by a pompous phraseology. It was not to be expected that the public in general would listen with patience, or with any other feelings than of derision and disdain, to the artless accents of the "Lyrical Ballads."

---

proved so much more successful, and the number of his poems so much greater, that my compositions, instead of forming a balance, appeared rather an interpolation of heterogeneous matter. Mr. Wordsworth added two or three poems written in his own character, in the impassioned, lofty, and sustained diction, which is characteristic of his genius. In this form the 'LYRICAL BALLADS' were published; and were presented by him as an experiment, whether subjects, which from their nature rejected the usual ornaments and extra-colloquial style of poems in general, might not be so managed in the language of ordinary life as to produce the pleasurable interest which it is the peculiar business of poetry to impart. To the second edition he added a preface of considerable length; in which, notwithstanding some passages of apparently a contrary import, he was understood to contend for the extension of this style to poetry of all kinds, and to reject as vicious and indefensible all phrases and forms of speech that were not included in what he (unfortunately, I think, adopting an equivocal expression) called the language of real life. From this preface, prefixed to poems in which it was impossible to deny the presence of original genius, however mistaken its direction might be deemed, arose the whole long-continued controversy. For from the conjunction of perceived power with supposed heresy I explain the inveteracy and, in some instances, I grieve to say, the acrimonious passions, with which the controversy has been conducted by the assailants.

Besides, the author was not disposed to make due allowance for the training and temper of the popular mind: his own temperament and opinions were, perhaps, at that time, such as in some degree to warp his better judgment. The clue to his *poetical* theory, in some of its questionable details, may be found in his *political* principles; these had been democratical, and still, though in some degree modified, they were of a republican character. At this period he entertained little reverence for ancient institutions, as such; and he felt little sympathy with the higher classes of society. He was deeply impressed with a sense of the true dignity of the lower orders, and their sufferings; and his design was to endeavour to recover for them the rights of the human family, and the franchises of universal brotherhood, of which, he appears to have thought, they had been robbed by the wealthy, the noble, and the few. He desired to impart moral grandeur to poverty, and to invest the objects of irrational and inanimate nature with a beauty and grace, of which, it seemed to him, they had been stripped by a heartless and false taste, pretending to the title of delicacy and refinement.

Doubtless, there was much that was noble and true in this theory, and much was laudable in the design; but it did not contain the whole truth, and was liable to abuse.

Society is a complex system. Harmony is its genuine voice; and that harmony cannot be maintained without a due adjustment of its various parts. It is not by exalting one element to the prejudice of another, but by preserving the symmetry and proportion of the whole in a graduated scale of order, that the true dignity and welfare of each part, and of the whole framework of society as composed of parts, and as depending for its soundness on the health of the parts, can be promoted; whereas, by an undue depression of one part, the whole is deranged. Perhaps, when he composed some of these earlier poems, the author did not fully realize the force of these principles, which are taught with so much power in his later works.

In some of these poems, also, he seemed to take a pleasure in running counter to conventional usages, and in defying received opinions, simply because they were received, and even when it was not easily to be proved that those usages and opinions were erroneous. He would have made Poetry perform certain functions which she had never before consented to discharge. Such verses, for instance, as,

"A little child, dear brother Jem;"[1]

again,

"And to the left three yards beyond,
You see a little muddy pond
Of water, never dry;
I've measured it from side to side,
'Tis three feet long, and two feet wide;"

and again,

"A cruel, cruel fire, they say,
Into her bones was sent;
It dried her body like a cinder,
And almost turned her bones to tinder;"

---

[1] Vol. i. p. 158. The line, it is true, was Coleridge's (see above, p. 109.), but was adopted, though not without some remonstrance, by Wordsworth.

seemed like wanton affronts to the judgment of the world, and might be resented by many as indicating a temper which would hurl defiance against public opinion with wayward wilfulness, petulant pride, and random recklessness.[1]

It may, I think, be asserted that the judgment here pronounced expresses the sentiment of his own maturer years. He would not have written such lines as these in his later days. Indeed, they, and some of a like kind which appear in the first three impressions of the "Lyrical Ballads," are not found in succeeding editions[2]; and, upon the whole, it may now be affirmed, that among all the poets of England, none has surpassed him in elaborate workmanship, both in the form and expression of his thoughts.

---

[1] Even in the edition of 1807 *, the "Blind Highland Boy" is represented us follows:

> "*A household tub, like one of those*
> *Which women use to wash their clothes,*
> *This carried the Blind Boy.*"

These lines have now disappeared; and the "Highland Boy" sets sail in a very different vessel.†

It is remarkable that some critics, entertaining democratical opinions, should have been among the bitterest censors of these and similar passages: it would seem as if, in pronouncing judgment on Poetry, they forgot or abandoned the tenets of their political creed.

[2] See the valuable remarks on this subject which will be found in Mr. Coleridge's Biog. Lit., vol. ii. p. 129—185., with additional observations from the last editor.

---

* Vol. ii. pp. 72, 73. † Vol. iii. p. 35.

CHAPTER XIV.

RESIDENCE IN GERMANY.

"On Tuesday morning, Sept. 18. 1798, about two o'clock, we were informed that we were in sight of land," says Miss Wordsworth, "and before ten we were at the mouth of the Elbe. We landed at Hamburgh at four in the afternoon."[1] Wordsworth acted as the interpreter of the party, for Coleridge "could then only speak English and Latin,"[2] but Wordsworth, though not able to speak German, conversed fluently in French.

On Wednesday, Sept. 26., "we dined with Mr. Klopstock, and had the pleasure of meeting his brother, the Poet, a venerable old man retaining the liveliness of youth. He sustained an animated conversation with William the whole afternoon." Wordsworth made notes of his conversations with Klopstock, which were for the most part on poetical topics. These notes have been given to the world by Mr. Coleridge, in "The Friend,"[3] and they are also reprinted in the last edition of his Biographia Literaria[4]; I will not therefore reproduce them here. There are, however, certain characteristic sentiments expressed by Wordsworth, which ought to find a place in these Memoirs; let me therefore insert them.[1]

---

[1] Letter dated Hamburgh, Friday, Sept. 21. 1798.

[2] See his Letter to Wade in Cottle's Reminiscences, vol. ii. p. 20.

[3] Satyrane's Letters, Letter iii.

[4] Vol. ii. p. 232—249.

"Klopstock spoke very slightingly of Kotzebue, as an immoral author in the first place, and next, as deficient in power. 'At Vienna,' said he, 'they are transported with him; but we do not reckon the people of Vienna either the wisest or the wittiest people of Germany.' He said Wieland was a charming author, and a sovereign master of his own language; that in this respect Goethe could not be compared to him, nor indeed could anybody else. He said that his fault was to be fertile to exuberance. I told him the 'OBERON' had just been translated into English. He asked me if I was not delighted with the poem. I answered, that I thought the story began to flag about the seventh or eighth book; and observed, that it was unworthy of a man of genius to make the interest of a long poem turn entirely upon animal gratification. He seemed at first disposed to excuse this by saying that there are different subjects for poetry, and that poets are not willing to be restricted in their choice. I answered that I thought the *passion* of love as well suited to the purposes of poetry as any other passion; but that it was a cheap way of pleasing to fix the attention of the reader through a long poem on the pure *appetite*. 'Well! but,' said he, 'you see that such poems please everybody.' I answered, that it was the province of a great poet to raise people up to his own level, not to descend to theirs. He agreed, and confessed, that on no account whatsoever would he have written a work like the 'OBERON.' . . . . An Englishman had presented him with the Odes of

---

[1] Biographia Literaria, S. T. Coleridge, vol. ii. p. 246. Satyrane's Letters.

Collins, which he had read with pleasure. He knew little or nothing of Gray, except his 'ELEGY, written in a country CHURCH-YARD.' He complained of the Fool in 'LEAR.' I observed that he seemed to give a terrible wildness to the distress; but still he complained. He asked whether it was not allowed that Pope had written rhymed poetry with more skill than any of our writers. I said I preferred Dryden, because his couplets had greater variety in their movement. He thought my reason a good one; but asked whether the rhyme of Pope were not more exact. This question I understood as applying to the final terminations, and observed to him that I believed it was the case; but that I thought it was easy to excuse some inaccuracy in the final sounds, if the general sweep of the verse was superior. I told him that we were not so exact with regard to the final endings of lines as the French.

He seemed to think that no language could be so far formed as that it might not be enriched by idioms borrowed from another tongue. I said this was a very dangerous practice; and added, that I thought Milton had often injured both his prose and verse by taking this liberty too frequently. I recommended to him the prose works of Dryden as models of pure and native English. I was treading upon tender ground, as I have reason to suppose that he has himself liberally indulged in the practice. . . . .

"I asked what he thought of Kant. He said that his reputation was much on the decline in Germany; that for his own part he was not surprised to find it so, as the works of Kant were to him utterly incomprehensible; that he had often been pestered by the Kanteans, but was rarely in the practice of arguing with them. His custom was to produce the book, open it, and point to a passage, and beg they would explain it. This they ordinarily attempted to do by substituting their own ideas. 'I do not want, I say, an explanation of your own ideas, but of the passage which is before us. In this way I generally bring the dispute to an immediate conclusion.' He spoke of Wolfe as the first metaphysician they had in Germany. Wolfe had followers, but they could hardly be called a sect; and, luckily, till the appearance of Kant, about fifteen years ago, Germany had not been pestered by any sect of philosophers whatsoever, but each man had separately pursued his inquiries uncontrolled by the dogmas of a master. Kant had appeared ambitious to be the founder of a sect; he had succeeded; but the Germans were now coming to their senses again. He said that Nicolai and Engel had, in different ways, contributed to disenchant the nation; but above all, the incomprehensibility of the philosopher and his philosophy. He seemed pleased to hear that, as yet, Kant's doctrines had not met with many admirers in England; he did not doubt but that we had too much wisdom to be duped by a writer who set at defiance the common sense and common understandings of men. We talked of tragedy. He seemed to rate highly the power of exciting tears. I said that nothing was more easy than to deluge an audience; that it was done every day by the meanest writers."

Coleridge parted from Wordsworth and his sister at Hamburg, and went to Ratzeburg, thirty-five miles N.E. from Hamburg, on the road to Lubeck; and at

Ratzeburg he lived four months.[1] Thence he went to Göttingen, where he spent five months.

But to return to Wordsworth. His sister thus writes:

"We quitted Hamburg on Wednesday evening, at five o'clock, reached Luneburg to breakfast on Thursday, and arrived at Brunswick between three and four o'clock on Friday evening. . . . There we dined. It is an old, silent, dull-looking place; the duke's palace a large white building, with no elegance in its external appearance. The next morning we set off at eight You can have no idea of the badness of the roads. The diligence arrived at eight at night at the city of GOSLAR, on Saturday, Oct. 6., the distance being only twenty-five miles."

Wordsworth and his sister took up their abode at Goslar, with a view of entering into German society, and of learning the German language. But in this they were somewhat disappointed. They did not form acquaintances easily: the place was not very hospitable to strangers; and, as Coleridge told him, he had two impediments in his way toward the attainment of his end. "You have two things against you: your not loving smoke; and your sister. If the manners at Goslar resemble those at Ratzeburg, it is almost necessary to be able to bear smoke. Can Dorothy endure smoke? Here, when my friends come to see me, the candle nearly goes out, the air is so thick."

"Coleridge," says Miss W., "is very happily situated at Ratzeburg for learning the language." "*We* are not fortunately situated here with respect to the attainment of our main object, a knowledge of the language. We have, indeed, gone on improving in that respect, but not so expeditiously as we might have done: for there is no society at Goslar, it is a lifeless town; and it seems that here in Germany a man travelling alone may do very well, but, if his sister or wife goes with him, he must give entertainments. So we content ourselves with talking to the people of the house &c., and reading German."

---

[1] See Biog. Liter. vol. ii. p. 204. Cottle's Reminiscences, vol. ii. p. 20.

However, the place was an interesting one in some other respects. It is situated at the foot of a cluster of mountains, which make part of a very extensive forest, the Hartz forest. These mountains are chiefly covered with pine, oaks, and beech. "We have plenty of dry walks; but Goslar is very cold in winter." And a most severe winter they had — the winter of 1798–9, the severest in the century.

In other respects, it would appear, Goslar, with its solitude and leisure, possessed advantages, of which the Poet knew how to avail himself.

"William," says his sister, "is very industrious: his mind is always active; indeed, too much so; he overwearies himself, and suffers from pain and weakness in the side."

His mind recurred to his native land, and to the scenes of his early youth:

"I travelled among unknown men,
  In lands beyond the sea.
Nor, England, did I know till then,
  What love I bore to thee." [1]

And the scenery of the Dove returned to his mind:

---

[1] Vol. i. p. 214.

"She dwelt among the untrodden ways
Beneath the springs of Dove."[1]

These poems, and their companions, *Strange fits of passion have I known*[2], and *Three years she grew in sun and shower*[3], and *A slumber did my spirit seal*[4], were written at this time. Here also he composed the lines *To a Sexton*[5], *The Danish Boy*[6], *intended as a Prelude to a Ballad never written.* Here also was written *A Poet's Epitaph, Art thou a statist* —— ?[7]

"He is retired as noontide dew,
Or fountain in a noon-day grove;
And you must love him, ere to you
He will seem worthy of your love;"

words which some of his most intimate friends have applied to the author himself.

Here also were written some other poems, concerning which the author gave the following information.[8]

Lucy Gray.[9]—"Written at Goslar, in Germany, in 1799. It was founded on a circumstance told me by my sister, of a little girl who, not far from Halifax, in Yorkshire, was bewildered in a snow-storm. Her footsteps were tracked by her parents to the middle of the lock of a canal, and no other vestige of her, backward or forward, could be traced. The body, however, was found in the canal. The way in which the incident was treated, and the spiritualising of the character, might furnish hints for contrasting the imaginative influences, which I have endeavoured to throw over common life, with Crabbe's matter-of-fact style of handling subjects of the same kind. This is not spoken to his disparagement, far from it; but to direct the attention of thoughtful readers into whose hands these notes may fall, to a comparison that may enlarge the circle of their sensibilities, and tend to produce in them a catholic judgment."

---

[1] Vol. i. p. 215.
[2] Vol. i. p. 214.
[3] Vol. ii. p. 102.
[4] Vol. ii. p. 103.
[5] Vol. ii. p. 24.
[6] Vol. ii. p. 48.
[7] Vol. iv. p. 190.
[8] MSS. I. F.
[9] Vol. i. p. 156.

The piercing cold of the season, together with the indoor occupation of learning German, suggested some lines bespeaking sympathy in suffering with the feeblest insects of creation.

Lines written in Germany, 1798–9[1]—"A plague," &c. — "A bitter winter it was when these verses were composed by the side of my sister, in our lodgings, at a draper's house, in the romantic imperial town of Goslar, on the edge of the Hartz forest. In this town the German Emperors of the Franconian line were accustomed to keep their court, and it retains vestiges of ancient splendour. So severe was the cold of this winter, that when we passed out of the parlour warmed by the stove, our cheeks were struck by the air as by cold iron. I slept in a room over a passage that was not ceiled. The people of the house used to say rather unfeelingly, that they expected I should be frozen to death some night; but with the protection of a pelisse lined with fur, and a dog's-skin bonnet, such as was worn by the peasants, I walked daily on the ramparts, or on a sort of public ground or garden, in which was a pond. Here I had no companion but a kingfisher, a beautiful creature that used to glance by me. I consequently became much attached to it. During these walks I composed *The Poet's Epitaph*."[2]

Here also he wrote *Ruth*[3]; which was "suggested by an account he had of a wanderer in Somersetshire."

---

[1] MSS. I. F.

[2] Vol. iv. p. 189.

[3] Vol. ii. p. 116.

Here also when his memory was at leisure, it reverted to his schoolboy days. *The Address to the Scholars of a Village School*[1],

"I heard the blessing which to you
Our common friend and father sent,"

appears to refer to the death-bed farewell of his own master, Taylor; and the kindred poems, *The Two April Mornings*[2]; *The Fountain, a Conversation*[3]; *Matthew*[4], seem to be connected more or less nearly with the same person, and some of his predecessors or successors. The printed note prefixed to the last-named poem, *Matthew*, speaks of "a school in which there is a tablet, on which are inscribed the names of the schoolmasters."

Certain it is, while he was at Goslar, his mind was often roaming on the banks of Esthwaite and Windermere. He then composed the lines on *Nutting*[5], in which he describes the discretion of his ancient Dame, and the joys of his schoolboy days, and the winter scene on Esthwaite Lake, and the influence of natural objects in calling forth his imagination in early youth.

"Wisdom and spirit of the universe,[6]
Thou soul, that art the eternity of thought!
And givest to forms and images a breath
And everlasting motion, not in vain

---

[1] Vol. v. p. 124.

[2] Vol. iv. p. 195.

[3] Vol. iv. p. 197.

[4] Vol. iv. p. 193. See above, p. 37, 38.

[5] Vol. ii. p. 98.

[6] Vol. i. p. 172.

By day or starlight thus from my first dawn
Of childhood didst thou intertwine for me
The passions that build up our human soul;
Not with the mean and vulgar works of man,
But with high objects."

There, also, he wrote those other lines:

"There was a Boy: ye knew him well, ye cliffs
And islands of Winander."[1]

He sent these verses in MS. to his friend Coleridge, then at Ratzeburg, who thus writes[2] in reply: "The blank lines gave me as much direct pleasure as was possible in the general bustle of pleasure with which I received and read your letter. I observed, I remember, that the 'fingers woven,'[3] &c., only puzzled me; and though I liked the twelve or fourteen first lines very well, yet I liked the remainder much better. Well, now I have read them again, they are very beautiful, and leave an affecting impression. That

'Uncertain heaven received
Into the bosom of the steady lake,'

I should have recognised any where; and had I met these lines running wild in the deserts of Arabia, I should have instantly screamed out 'Wordsworth!'"

In the correspondence which passed between him and Wordsworth, Coleridge expresses unbounded admiration and affection for his friend. After speaking of some plan for their future habitation in neighbourhood to each other, "I am sure I need not say," he writes, "how you are incorporated into the better part of my being; how, whenever I spring forward into the future with noble affections, I always alight by your side."

---

[1] Vol. ii. p. 93.

[2] In a letter dated Ratzeburg, Dec. 10. 1798, addressed to
"*M. Wordsworth,*
Chez Madame la Veuve Dippermaer,
Dans la Grande Rue,
Goslar, Basse Saxe."

[3] In imitating the hooting of the owls, "William Raincock, of Rayrigg, a fine spirited lad, took the lead of all my school-fellows in this art." — MSS. I. F.

The following discussion concerning German hexameters, in two of Coleridge's letters, is interesting in itself, and introduces expressions of strong attachment to Wordsworth and his sister:

"With regard to measures, I am convinced that *our* language is, in some instances, better adapted to these metres than the *German:* e. g. '*a*' and '*the*' are better short syllables than '*ein*' and '*der;*' '*not*' than '*nicht.*' . . . Is the German, in truth, adapted to these metres? I grievously suspect that it is all pure pedantry. Some advantages there, doubtless, are, for we cannot fall foul of any thing without advantages."

And in another letter he writes:

"As to the German hexameters, they have in their very essence grievous defects. It is possible and probable that we receive organically very little pleasure from the Greek and Latin hexameters; for, most certainly, *we* read all the spondees as iambics or trochees. But then the words have a fixed quantity. We know it; and there is an effect produced in the brain similar to harmony without passing through the ear-hole. The same words, with different meanings, rhyming in Italian, is a close analogy. I suspect that great part of the pleasure derived from Virgil consists in this satisfaction of the judgment. 'Majestate manûs' begins an hexameter; and a very good beginning it is. 'Majestate magnâ' is read exactly in the same manner, yet that were a false quantity; and a schoolmaster would conceit that it offended his *ear*. Secondly, the words having fixed quantities in Latin, the lines are always of equal length in *time*; but in German, what is now a spondee is in the next line only two-thirds of a dactyl. Thirdly, women all dislike the hexameters with whom I have talked. They say, and in my opinion they say truly, that only the two last feet have any discernible melody; and when the liberty of two spondees, 'Jovis incrementum,' is used, it is absolute prose.

"When I was ill and wakeful, I composed some English hexameters:

'William, my teacher, my friend! dear William and dear Dorothea!
Smooth out the folds of my letter, and place it on desk or on table;
Place it on table or desk; and your right hands loosely half[1]-closing,
Gently sustain them in air, and extending the digit didactic,
Rest it a moment on each of the forks of the five-forkèd left hand,
Twice on the breadth of the thumb, and once on the tip of each finger;
Read with a nod of the head in a humouring recitativo;
And, as I live, you will see my hexameters hopping before you.
This is a galloping measure; a hop, and a trot, and a gallop!

---

[1] False metre.

All my hexameters fly, like stags pursued by the stag-hounds,
Breathless and panting, and ready to drop, yet flying still[1] onwards.
I would full fain pull in my hard-mouthed runaway hunter;
But our English Spondeans are clumsy yet impotent curb-reins;
And so to make him go slowly, no way have I left but to lame him.

‘William, my head and my heart! dear Poet that feelest and thinkest!
Dorothy, eager of soul, my most affectionate sister!
Many a mile, O! many a wearisome mile are ye distant,
Long, long, comfortless roads, with no one eye that doth know us.
O! it is all too far to send to you mockeries idle:
Yea, and I feel it not right! But O! my friends, my beloved!
Feverish and wakeful I lie, — I am weary of feeling and thinking.
Every thought is worn *down*,—I am weary, yet cannot be vacant.
Five long hours have I tossed, rheumatic heats, dry and flushing,
Gnawing behind in my head, and wandering and throbbing about me,
Busy and tiresome, my friends, as the beat of the boding night[2]-spider.’

“I forget the beginning of the line:

‘ . . . . . . my eyes are a burthen,
Now unwillingly closed, now open and aching with darkness.
O! what a life is the eye! what a fine and inscrutable essence!

---

ill flying onwards,” were perhaps better.

[2] False metre.

Him that is utterly blind, nor glimpses the fire that warms him;
Him that never beheld the swelling breast of his mother;
Him that ne'er smiled at the bosom as babe that smiles in its slumber;
Even to him it exists, it stirs and moves in its prison;
Lives with a separate life, and "Is it the spirit?" he murmurs:
Sure, it has thoughts of its own, and to see is only its language.'

"There was a great deal more, which I have forgotten, as I never wrote it down. No doubt, much better might be written; but these will still give you some idea of them. The last line which I wrote I remember, and write it for the truth of the sentiment, scarcely less true in company than in pain and solitude:

'William, my head and my heart! dear William and dear Dorothea!
You have all in each other; but I am lonely, and want you!'"

CHAPTER XV.

RETURN TOWARDS ENGLAND.—COMMENCEMENT OF "THE PRELUDE."

In the beginning of 1799, Wordsworth and his sister were preparing to leave Goslar, which they quitted on the 10th February of that year.

He felt inspirited by the change of place. When he set forth from this imperial city, so dull and dreary as it had been to him, and when the prospect of a transition from its frost and snow to a more genial climate opened upon him, he seemed to be like one emancipated from the thraldom of a prison: it gave new life and alacrity to his soul. He had been composing Minor Poems; but he now projected something of a higher aim, and more comprehensive scope. He was about to enter his thirtieth year. It was time that he should ascertain for himself whether he was justified in choosing a poet's life as a profession; he would, therefore, make some serious essay, for the purpose of testing his own strength. What should be the argument? After much consideration, he chose his own intellectual being as his subject, "The growth of his own mind." He would review his own metaphysical history, from infancy through boyhood, school time, and college life: his travels, his hopes and aspirations, his disappointments and distresses, his inward conflicts and perplexities, the restoration of health and freshness to a disordered and drooping imagination — these should be the topics ich he would treat. And the proposed poem should addressed to one who would sympathise with him a poet and a friend — S. T. COLERIDGE.

Hence, therefore, scarcely having issued from the tes of Goslar, he poured forth the impassioned ain which forms the commencement of "The elude."

"O there is blessing in this gentle breeze,
A visitant that while it fans my cheek
Doth seem half-conscious of the joy it brings
From the green fields, and from yon azure sky.
Whate'er its mission, the soft breeze can come
To none more grateful than to me; escaped
From the vast City, where I long had pined
A discontented sojourner: now free,
Free as a bird to settle where I will.

* * * * * *

For I, methought, while the sweet breath of heaven
Was blowing on my body, felt within
A correspondent breeze, that gently moved
With quickening virtue, but is now become
A tempest, a redundant energy,
Vexing its own creation. Thanks to both,
And their congenial powers, that, while they join
In breaking up a long-continued frost,
Bring with them vernal promises, the hope
Of active days urged on by flying hours,—
Days of sweet leisure, taxed with patient thought
Abstruse, nor wanting punctual service high,
Matins and vespers of harmonious verse!

"Thus far, O Friend! did I, not used to make
A present joy the matter of a song,
Pour forth that day my soul in measured strains
That would not be forgotten, and are here
Recorded: to the open fields I told

A prophecy: poetic numbers came
Spontaneously, to clothe in priestly robe
A renovated spirit singled out,
Such hope was mine, for holy services.
My own voice cheered me, and far more, the mind's
Internal echo of the imperfect sound;
To both I listened, drawing from them both
A cheerful confidence in things to come."

The poem, thus commenced, proceeded for a while with a regular pace: it then paused for a considerable interval. Of the fourteen books, which now complete it, six had been written in 1805, and the seventh was begun in the spring of that year; it opens with the following lines[1]:

"Six changeful years have vanished, since I first
Poured out (saluted by that quickening breeze
Which met me issuing from the City's walls)
A glad preamble to this verse: I sang
Aloud, with fervour irresistible
Of short-lived transport, like a torrent bursting
From a black thunder-cloud, down Scawfell's side
To rush and disappear. But soon broke forth
(So willed the Muse) a less impetuous stream,
That flowed awhile with unabating strength;
Then stopped for years; not audible again
Before last primrose-time. Beloved Friend!
The assurance which then cheered some heavy thoughts
On thy departure to a foreign land
Has failed; too slowly moves the promised work."

The seventh book and the remaining seven were written before the end of June, 1805, when his friend Coleridge was in the island of Malta, for the restoration of his health.

---

[1] Prelude, book vii. p. 171.

Having given this brief outline of "The Prelude," I will reserve further notice of it to a later stage of the narrative.

Early in the spring of 1799, Wordsworth and his sister returned to England. "We are now," he says in a letter to Cottle, "in the county of Durham, just upon the borders of Yorkshire. We left Coleridge well at Göttingen a month ago. We have spent our time pleasantly enough in Germany, but we are right glad to find ourselves in England — for we have learnt to know its value."

CHAPTER XVI.

SETTLEMENT AT GRASMERE.

THE Poet Gray visited Grasmere in October, 1769. He came from Keswick, over Dunmail Raise, and thus describes what he then saw[1]: — " *Oct.* 8. . . I entered (coming from Keswick) Westmoreland, a second time, and now began to see Helm-crag, distinguished from its rugged neighbours, not so much by its height as by the strange broken outlines of its top, like some gigantic building demolished, and the stones that composed it flung across each other in wild confusion. Just beyond it opens one of the sweetest landscapes that art ever attempted to imitate. The bosom of the mountains spreading here into a broad bason discovers in the midst Grasmere-Water. Its margin is hollowed into small bays, with bold eminences, some of rock, some of soft turf, that half conceal and vary the figure of the little lake they command. From the shore, a low promontory pushes itself far into the water, and on it stands a white village, with the parish church rising in the midst of it. Hanging inclosures, corn fields, and meadows, green as an emerald, with their trees, and hedges, and cattle, fill up the whole space from the edge of the water; and just opposite to you is a large farm-house, at the bottom of a steep smooth lawn, embosomed in old woods which climb halfway up the mountain's side, and discover above them a broken line of crags that crown the scene. *Not a single red tile, no flaring gentleman's house, or garden walls, break in upon the repose of this little unsuspected paradise; but all is peace, rusticity, and happy poverty in its neatest and most becoming attire.*"

---

[1] Gray's Works, ed. Mathias London, 1814, p. 459.

Such was the scene in which Mr. Wordsworth was now about to fix his abode.

In the spring of 1799, after their return from Germany, he and his sister went to visit their friends, the Hutchinsons, at Sockburn-on-Tees, and they remained there, with the exception of the time spent in certain occasional excursions, till almost the close of the year.

On September 2d, Wordsworth writes from Sockburn to his friend Cottle, "If you come down . . . I will accompany you on your tour. You will come by Greta Bridge, which is about twenty miles from this place: thither Dorothy and I will go to meet you. . . . Dorothy will return to Sockburn, and I will accompany you into Cumberland and Westmoreland."

Coleridge joined Wordsworth in this excursion. Wordsworth was also accompanied by his sailor brother, John. Mr. Cottle was not able to proceed beyond Greta Bridge. It was Coleridge's first visit to the Lake country, and he thus describes his impressions, in a letter from Keswick to Miss Wordsworth, who remained with her friends at Sockburn.

"William has received your two letters. At Temple Sowerby we met your brother John, who accompanied us to Hawes-Water, Ambleside, and the divine sisters Rydal and Grasmere. Here we stayed two days. We accompanied John over the fork of Helvellyn, on a day when light and darkness coexisted in contiguous masses, and the earth and sky were but one. Nature lived for us in all her grandest accidents. We quitted him by a wild tarn just as we caught a view of the gloomy Ullswater.

"Your brother John is one of you; a man who hath solitary usings of his own intellect, deep in feeling, with a subtle tact, a swift instinct of truth and beauty: he interests me much."

"You can feel, what I cannot express for myself, how deeply I have been impressed by a world of scenery absolutely new to me. At Rydal and Grasmere I received, I think, the deepest delight; yet Hawes-Water, through many a varying view, kept my eyes dim with tears; and, the evening approaching, Derwent-Water, in diversity of harmonious features, in the majesty of its beauties, and in the beauty of its majesty . . . . and the black crags close under the snowy mountains, whose snows were pinkish with the setting sun, and the reflections from the rich clouds that floated over some and rested upon others! —it was to me a vision of a fair country: why were you not with us?"

Wordsworth gives some particulars of the same tour as follows:—

"We left Cottle, as you know, at Greta Bridge. We were obliged to take the mail over Stanemoor: the road interesting with sun and mist. At Temple Sowerby I learned that John was at Newbiggin. I sent a note; he came, looks very well, said he would accompany us a few days. Next day we set off and dined at Mr. Myers', thence to Bampton, where we slept. On Friday proceeded along the lake of Hawes-Water, a noble scene which pleased us much. The mists hung so low that we could not go directly over to Ambleside, so we went round by Long Sleddale to Kentmere, Troutbeck, Rayrigg, and Bowness; . . . a rainy and raw day. . . . Went to the ferry, much disgusted with the new erections about Windermere; . . . thence to Hawkshead: great change among the people since we were last there. Next day by Rydal to Grasmere, Robert Newton's. At Robert Newton's we have remained till to-day. John left us on Tuesday: we walked with him to the tarn. This day was a fine one, and we had some grand mountain scenery; the rest of the week has been bad weather. The evening before last we walked to the upper waterfall at Rydal, and saw it through the gloom, and it was very magnificent. Coleridge was much struck with Grasmere and its neighbourhood. I have much to say to you. You will think my plan a mad one, but I have thought of building a house there by the lake-side. John would give me 40*l.* to buy the ground. There is a small house at Grasmere empty, which, perhaps, we may take; but of this we will speak."

Wordsworth returned from the North to his sister at Sockburn; and the result of their joint deliberation was that the building scheme was abandoned, and the "small house" was taken, and they entered upon it on St. Thomas's day, 1799.

A few days after their arrival Wordsworth wrote to Coleridge describing their journey from Sockburn to Grasmere.[1]

"We arrived here on the evening of St. Thomas's day, last Friday, and have now been four days in our new abode without writing to you — a long time! but we have been in such confusion as not to have had a moment's leisure. My dear friend, we talk of you perpetually, and for me I see you every where. But let me be a little more methodical. We left Sockburn last Tuesday morning. We crossed the Tees by moonlight in the Sockburn fields, and after ten good miles' riding came in sight of the Swale. It is there a beautiful river, with its green bank and flat holms scattered over with trees. Four miles further brought us to Richmond, with its huge ivied castle, its friarage steeple, its castle tower resembling a huge steeple, and two other steeple towers, for such they appeared to us. The situation of this place resembles that of Barnard Castle, but I should suppose is somewhat inferior to it. George accompanied us eight miles further, and there we parted with sorrowful hearts. We were now in Wensley Dale, and D. and I set off side by side to foot it as far as Kendal. I will not clog my letter with a description of this celebrated dale; but I must not neglect to mention that a little before sunset we reached one of the waterfalls, of which I read you a short description in Mr. Taylor's tour. It is a singular scene; I meant to have given you some account of it, but I feel myself too lazy to execute the task. 'Tis such a performance as you might have expected from some giant gardener employed by one of Queen Elizabeth's courtiers, if this same giant gardener had consulted with Spenser, and they two had finished the work together. By this you will understand that it is at once formal and wild. We reached Askrigg, twelve miles, before six in the evening, having been obliged to walk the last two miles over hard frozen roads to the great annoyance of our ankles and feet. Next morning the earth was thinly covered with snow, enough to make the road soft and prevent its being slippery. On leaving Askrigg we turned aside to see another waterfall. It was a beautiful morning, with driving snow showers, which disappeared by fits, and unveiled the east, which was all one delicious pale orange colour. After walking through two small fields we came to a mill, which we passed; and in a moment a sweet little valley opened before us, with an area of grassy ground, and a stream dashing over various laminæ of black rocks close under a bank covered with firs; the bank and stream on our left, another woody bank on our right, and the flat meadow in front, from which, as at Buttermere, the stream had retired as it were to hide itself under the shade. As we walked up this delightful valley we were tempted to look back perpetually on the stream, which reflected the orange lights of the morning among the gloomy rocks, with a brightness varying with the agitation of the current. The steeple of Askrigg was between us and the east, at the bottom of the valley; it was not a quarter of a mile distant, but oh! how far we were from it! The two banks seemed to join before us with a facing of rock common to them both. When we reached this bottom the valley opened out again; two rocky banks on each side, which, hung with ivy and moss, and fringed luxuriantly with brushwood, ran directly parallel to each other, and then approaching with a gentle curve at their point of union, presented a lofty waterfall, the termination of the valley. It was a keen frosty morning, showers of snow threatening us, but the sun bright and active. We had a task of twenty-one miles to perform in a short winter's day. All this put our minds into such a state of excitation that we were no unworthy spectators of this delightful scene. On a nearer approach the waters seemed to fall down a tall arch or niche that had shaped itself by insensible moulderings in the wall of an old castle. We left this spot with reluctance, but highly exhilarated. When we had walked about a mile and a half we overtook two men with a string of ponies and some empty carts. I recommended to Dorothy to avail herself of this opportunity of husbanding her strength: we rode with them more than two miles. 'Twas bitter cold, the wind driving the snow behind us in the best style of a mountain storm. We soon reached an inn at a place called Hardrane, and descending from our vehicles, after warming ourselves by the cottage fire, we walked up the brookside to take a view of a third waterfall. We had not walked above a few hundred yards between two winding rocky banks before we came full upon the waterfall, which seemed to throw itself in a narrow line from a lofty wall of rock, the water, which shot manifestly to some distance from the rock, seeming to be dispersed into a thin shower scarcely visible before it reached the bason. We were disappointed in the cascade itself, though the introductory and accompanying banks were an exquisite mixture of grandeur and beauty. We walked up to the fall; and what would I not give if I could convey to you the feelings and images which were then communicated to me? After cautiously sounding our way over stones of all colours and sizes, encased in the clearest water formed by the spray of the fall, we found the rock, which before had appeared like a wall, extending itself over our heads, like the ceiling of a huge cave, from the summit of which the waters shot directly over our heads into a bason, and among fragments wrinkled over with masses of ice as white as snow, or rather, as Dorothy says, like congealed froth. The water fell at least ten yards from us, and we stood directly behind it, the excavation not so deep in the rock as to impress any feeling of darkness, but lofty and magnificent; but in connection with the adjoining banks excluding as much of the sky as could well be spared from a scene so exquisitely beautiful. The spot where we stood was as dry as the chamber in which I am now sitting, and the incumbent rock, of which the groundwork was limestone, veined and dappled with colours which melted into each other with every possible variety of colour. On the summit of the cave were three festoons, or rather wrinkles, in the rock, run up parallel like the folds of a curtain when it is drawn up. Each of these was hung with icicles of various length, and nearly in the middle of the festoon in the deepest valley of the waves that ran parallel to each other, the stream shot from the rows of icicles in irregular fits of strength, and with a body of water that varied every moment. Sometimes the stream shot into the bason in one continued current; sometimes it was interrupted almost in the midst of its fall, and was blown towards part of the waterfall at no great distance from our feet like the heaviest thunder-shower. In such a situation you have at every moment a feeling of the presence of the sky. Large fleecy clouds drove over our heads above the rush of the water, and the sky appeared of a blue more than usually brilliant. The rocks on each side, which, joining with the side of this cave, formed the vista of the brook, were chequered with three diminutive waterfalls or rather courses of water. Each of these was a minature of all that summer and winter can produce of delicate beauty. The rock in the centre of the falls, where the water was most abundant, a deep black, the adjoining parts yellow, white, purple, and dove-colour, covered with water-plants of the most vivid green, and hung with streaming icicles, that in some places seem to conceal the verdure of the plants, and the violet and yellow variegation of the rocks; and in some places render the colours more brilliant. I cannot express to you the enchanting effect produced by this Arabian scene of colour as the wind blew aside the great waterfall behind which we stood and alternately hid and revealed each of these fairy cataracts in irregular succession, or displayed them with various gradations of distinctness as the intervening spray was thickened or dispersed. What a scene too in summer! In the luxury of our imagination we could not help feeding upon the pleasure which this cave, in the heat of a July noon, would spread through a frame exquisitely sensible. That huge rock on the right, the bank winding round on the left with all its living foliage, and the breeze stealing up the valley, and bedewing the cavern with the freshest imaginable spray. And then the murmur of the water, the quiet, the seclusion, and a long summer day."

---

[1] The original of this letter is very difficult to decypher, and I cannot, therefore, vouch for exact accuracy in the transcript.

It was on this journey that the subject of a poem was suggested: *Hart-Leap Well.*[1] Hart-Leap Well is a small spring about five miles from Richmond, near the side of the road to Askrigg. Its name is derived from a remarkable chase, the memory of which is preserved by the monuments mentioned in the poem. The following details concerning the composition of the poem are derived from the author's recollections.[2]

---

[1] Vol. ii. p. 138.

[2] MSS. I. F.

Hart-Leap Well.—"The first eight stanzas were composed extempore one winter evening in the cottage; when, after having tired and disgusted myself with labouring at an awkward passage in 'The Brothers,' I started with a sudden impulse to this, to get rid of the other, and finished it in a day or two. My sister and I had passed the place a few weeks before in our wild winter journey from Sockburn on the banks of the Tees to Grasmere. A peasant whom we met near the spot told us the story, so far as concerned the name of the well, and the hart, and pointed out the stones."

The Poet thus describes this winter-journey to Grasmere[1]:

"Bleak season was it, turbulent and wild,
When hitherward we journeyed, side by side,
Through bursts of sunshine and through flying showers,
Paced the long vales, how long they were, and yet
How fast that length of way was left behind,
Wensley's rich vale and Sedberge's naked heights.
The frosty wind, as if to make amends
For its keen breath, was aiding to our steps,
And drove us onward as two ships at sea;
Or, like two birds, companions in mid-air,
Parted and reunited by the blast.
Stern was the face of nature: we rejoiced
In that stern countenance; for our souls thence drew
A feeling of their strength. The naked trees,
The icy brooks, as on we passed, appeared
To question us, 'Whence come ye? To what end?'"

We are now to imagine the Poet and his sister settled at GRASMERE, where they lived for eight years.

The church, which is the most prominent structure of this vale, is described in "The Excursion."

---

[1] Recluse, book i. MS.

"Not[1] raised in nice proportions was the pile,
But large and massy; for duration built;
With pillars crowded, and the roof upheld
By naked rafters, intricately crossed,
Like leafless underboughs, in some thick wood;
Admonitory texts inscribed the walls,
Each in its ornamental scroll . . .
. . . . The floor
Of nave and aisle in unpretending guise
Was occupied by oaken benches, ranged
In seemly rows."

Writing in later years to Lady Frederick Bentinck, the Poet says: "The church is a very ancient structure; some persons now propose to ceil it, a project, which, as a matter of taste and feeling, I utterly disapprove. At present, it is open to the rafters, and is accordingly spacious, and has a venerable appearance, favourable, when one first enters, to devotional impressions."

But to return: The cottage in which Wordsworth and his sister took up their abode, and which still retains the form it wore then[2], stands on the right hand, by the side of the then coach-road from Ambleside to Keswick, as it enters Grasmere, or, as that part of the village is called, TOWN-END. The front of it faces the lake; behind is a small plot of orchard and garden ground, in which there is a spring, and rocks; the enclosure shelves upward toward the woody sides of the mountains above it. Many of his poems, as the reader will remember, are associated with this fair spot:

"This plot of orchard ground is ours,
My trees they are, my sister's flowers."[3]

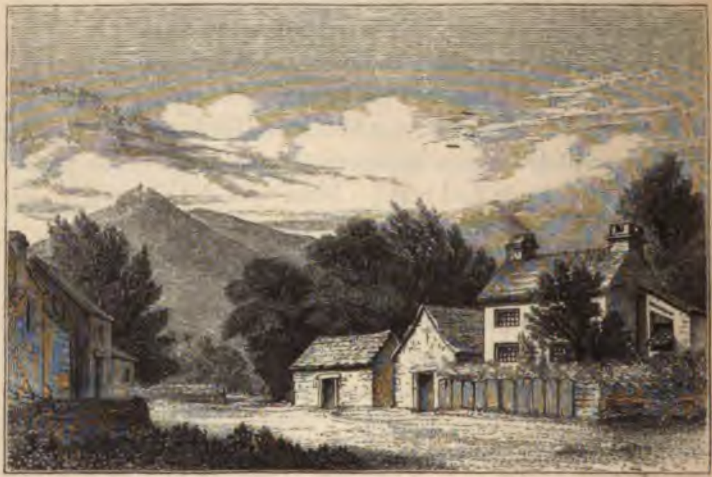
---

[1] Excursion, book v. vol. vi. p. 143.
[2] See the representation of it at the end of this chapter.
[3] "To a Butterfly," vol. i. p. 208.

In the first book of "The Recluse," still unpublished, he thus expresses his feelings in settling in his home at Grasmere, and in looking down from the hills which embosom the lake.

"On Nature's invitation do I come,
By Reason sanctioned. Can the choice mislead,
That made the calmest, fairest spot on earth,
With all its unappropriated good,
My own, and not mine only, for with me
Entrenched — say rather peacefully embowered —
Under yon orchard, in yon humble cot,
A younger orphan of a home extinct,
The only daughter of my parents dwells;
Aye, think on that, my heart, and cease to stir;
Pause upon that, and let the breathing frame
No longer breathe, but all be satisfied.
Oh, if such silence be not thanks to God
For what hath been bestowed, then where, where then
Shall gratitude find rest? Mine eyes did ne'er
Fix on a lovely object, nor my mind
Take pleasure in the midst of happy thoughts,
But either she, whom now I have, who now
Divides with me that loved abode, was there,
Or not far off. Where'er my footsteps turned,
Her voice was like a hidden bird that sang;
The thought of her was like a flash of light
Or an unseen companionship, a breath
Or fragrance independent of the wind.
In all my goings, in the new and old
Of all my meditations, and in this
Favourite of all, in this the most of all . . .
Embrace me then, ye hills, and close me in.
Now in the clear and open day I feel
Your guardianship: I take it to my heart;
'Tis like the solemn shelter of the night.
But I would call thee beautiful; for mild,
And soft, and gay, and beautiful thou art,

Dear valley, having in thy face a smile,
Though peaceful, full of gladness. Thou art pleased,
Pleased with thy crags, and woody steeps, thy lake,
Its one green island, and its winding shores,
The multitude of little rocky hills,
Thy church, and cottages of mountain-stone
Clustered like stars some few, but single most,
And lurking dimly in their shy retreats,
Or glancing at each other cheerful looks,
Like separated stars with clouds between."



Mr. Wordsworth's Cottage at Grasmere.

CHAPTER XVII.

SECOND VOLUME OF "LYRICAL BALLADS."

"I AM anxiously eager to have you steadily employed on 'THE RECLUSE,'" was the language of S. T. Coleridge, to his friend Wordsworth, in a letter addressed to him in the summer of 1799: and, "My dear friend, I do entreat you go on with 'The Recluse;' and I wish you would write a poem, in blank verse, addressed to those, who, in consequence of the complete failure of the French Revolution, have thrown up all hopes of the amelioration of mankind, and are sinking into an almost epicurean selfishness, disguising the same under the soft titles of domestic attachment and contempt for visionary *philosophes*. It would do great good, and might form a part of 'The Recluse,' for in my present mood I am wholly against the publication of any small poems."

Again, on Oct. 12. 1799, Coleridge says, "I long to see what you have been doing. O let it be the tail-piece of 'The Recluse!' for of nothing but 'The Recluse' can I hear patiently. That it is to be addressed to me makes me more desirous that it should not be a poem of itself. To be addressed, as a beloved man, by a thinker, at the close of such a poem as 'The Recluse,' a poem *non unius populi*, is the only event, I believe, capable of inciting in me an hour's vanity—vanity, nay, it is too good a feeling to be so called;

it would indeed be a self-elevation produced *ab extra*."

In Dec. 1799, he says, writing from London, "As to myself, I dedicate my nights and days to Stuart. . . . By all means let me have the tragedy and 'Peter Bell' as soon as possible;" and in Feb. 1800, "I grieve that 'The Recluse' sleeps."

Notwithstanding these exhortations from Coleridge (who, it would appear, calls "The Prelude," or poem on the growth of the author's own mind, by the name of "The Recluse"), Wordsworth was now preparing for publication a second volume of *smaller* poems. The first edition of the 12mo. single volume of the "Lyrical Ballads" was exhausted; and it was now to be reprinted, and published as the first volume of the "LYRICAL BALLADS in TWO VOLUMES."

The *second*[1] volume was to consist partly of some

---

[1] Its contents are as follows : —

(Lyrical Ballads, vol. ii. ed. London, 1800.)

	Page
Hart-leap Well - - - - - - -	1
There was a Boy, &c. - - - - - -	14
The Brothers, a Pastoral Poem - - - -	19
Ellen Irwin; or, the Braes of Kirtle - - -	46
Strange fits of passion I have known - - -	50
Song - - - - - - - - -	52
A slumber did my spirit seal - - - -	53
The Waterfall and the Eglantine - - - -	54
The Oak and the Broom, a Pastoral - - -	58
Lucy Gray - - - - - - -	64
The Idle Shepherd-Boys; or, Dungeon-Gill Force: a Pastoral - - - - - - -	69
'Tis said that some have died, &c. - - -	76
Poor Susan - - - - - - -	80
Inscription for the Spot where the Hermitage stood on St. Herbert's Island, Derwent-Water - -	82
Inscription for the House (an Outhouse) on the Island at Grasmere - - - - -	84
To a Sexton - - - - - - -	86

minor poems already mentioned as composed in Germany, and some others.

How little impression had been made on the public mind by Wordsworth's poetry, and how slender were the expectations of popularity for this new publication, may be estimated from the fact that the sum offered by Messrs. Longman for two editions of the two volumes, did not exceed 100*l.*; and the author's own anticipations were sufficiently indicated by the motto prefixed to this edition, and to the two following ones of 1802, and 1805, *Quam nihil ad genium, Papiniane, tuum!*

The first two months of their residence in the vale of Grasmere were very ungenial:

	Page
Andrew Jones - - - - - -	89
The Two Thieves; or, the last Stage of Avarice -	92
A Whirl-blast from behind the Hill - - -	96
Song for the Wandering Jew - - - -	98
Ruth - - - - - - - - -	103
Lines written with a Slate-pencil on a Stone, &c. -	117
Lines written on a Tablet in a School - -	120
The Two April Mornings - - - - -	123
The Fountain, a Conversation - - - -	127
Nutting - - - - - - - - -	132
Three years she grew, &c. - - - -	136
The Pet Lamb, a Pastoral - - - -	139
Written in Germany on one of the coldest Days in the Century - - - - - - -	144
The Childless Father - - - - -	147
The old Cumberland Beggar, a Description -	151
Rural Architecture - - - - - -	163
A Poet's Epitaph - - - - - -	165
A Character - - - - - - -	169
A Fragment (Danish Boy) - - - -	171
Poems on the naming of Places -	177 to 196
Michael, a Pastoral - - - - - -	199
Notes - - - - - - - -	226

"Two months unwearied of severest storm,
It put the temper of our minds to proof,
And found us faithful."

And more than this, it

"heard
The Poet mutter his prelusive songs
With cheerful heart."

The home of the Poet was cheered with the presence of his brother, Captain Wordsworth, already mentioned, with whom he went, on May 14th, on a visit to his friends, the Hutchinsons (who had moved to Gallow Hill, near Broughton), returning to Grasmere on the 7th of June; and, under the joint influence of natural beauty and domestic affection, his muse was in a happy mood.

At this time, among other poems, were written *The Brothers*, *The Idle Shepherd Boys*, *The Pet Lamb*, *Ruth*, *Michael*, *Poems on the naming of Places*. In the last-mentioned poems the author associated the names of his friends, as well as his own, with particular spots in his beloved vale. The occasions, and other circumstances of the others, were thus detailed by himself.[1]

The Brothers[2], 1800.—"This poem was composed in a grove at the north-eastern end of Grasmere Lake, which grove was in a great measure destroyed by turning the high road along the side of the water. The few trees that are left were spared at my intercession. The poem arose out of the fact mentioned to me, at Ennerdale, that a shepherd had fallen asleep upon the top of the rock called the "pillar," and perished as here described, his staff being left midway on the rock."

---

[1] MSS. I. F.

[2] Vol. i. p 187.

The Idle Shepherd Boys.[1] — Grasmere, Town-End, 1800. "I will only add a little monitory anecdote concerning this subject. When Coleridge and Southey were walking together upon the Fells, Southey observed that, if I wished to be considered a faithful painter of rural manners, I ought not to have said that my shepherd boys trimmed their rushen hats as described in the poem. Just as the words had passed his lips, two boys appeared with the very plant entwined round their hats. I have often wondered that Southey, who rambled so much about the mountains, should have fallen into this mistake; and I record it as a warning for others who, with far less opportunity than my dear friend had of knowing what things are, and far less sagacity, give way to presumptuous criticism, from which he was free, though in this matter mistaken. In describing a tarn under Helvellyn, I say,

> 'There sometimes doth a leaping fish
> Send through the tarn a lonely cheer.'

This was branded by a critic of those days, in a review ascribed to Mrs. Barbauld, as unnatural and absurd. I admire the genius of Mrs. Barbauld, and am certain that, had her education been favourable to imaginative influences, no female of her day would have been more likely to sympathise with that image, and to acknowledge the truth of the sentiment."

The Pet Lamb.[2]—Town-End, 1800. "Barbara Lewthwaite, now residing at Ambleside (1843), though much changed as to beauty, was one of two most lovely sisters. Almost the first words my poor brother John said, when he visited us at Grasmere, were, 'Were those two angels that I have just seen?' and from his description I have no doubt they were those two sisters. The mother died in childbed; and one of our neighbours, at Grasmere, told me that the loveliest sight she had ever seen was that mother as she lay in her coffin with her dead babe in her arm. I mention this to notice what I cannot but think a salutary custom, once universal in these vales: every attendant on a funeral made it a duty to look at the corpse in the coffin before the lid was closed, which was never done (nor I believe is now) till a minute or two before the corpse was removed. Barbara Lewthwaite was not, in fact, the child whom I had seen and overheard as engaged in the poem. I chose the name for reasons implied in the above, and will here add a caution against the use of names of living persons. Within a few months after the publication of this poem, I was much surprised, and more hurt, to find it in a child's school book, which, having been compiled by Lindley Murray, had come into use at Grasmere school, where Barbara was a pupil. And, alas, I had the mortification of hearing that she was very vain of being thus distinguished; and, in after life, she used to say that she remembered the incident, and what I said to her upon the occasion."

---

[1] Vol. i. p. 161.

[2] Vol. i. p. 167.

Michael.[1] — Town-End, 1800. Written about the same time as "The Brothers." "The sheepfold, on which so much of the poem turns, remains, or rather the ruins of it. The character and circumstances of Luke were taken from a family to whom had belonged, many years before, the house we lived in at Town-

---

[1] Vol. i. p. 267.

End, along with some fields and woodlands on the eastern shore of Grasmere. The name of the Evening Star was not in fact given to this house, but to another on the same side of the valley more to the north."

Naming of Places.[1] "It was an April morn, &c."—Grasmere, 1800. "This poem was suggested on the banks of the brook that runs through Easedale, which is, in some parts of its course, as wide and beautiful as brook can be. I have composed thousands of verses by the side of it."

To Joanna Hutchinson.—Grasmere, 1800. "The effect of her laugh is an extravagance, though the effect of the reverberation of voices in some parts of these mountains is very striking. There is, in 'The Excursion,' an allusion to the bleat of a lamb thus re-echoed and described, without any exaggeration, as I heard it on the side of Stickle Tarn, from the precipice that stretches on to Langdale Pikes."

"*There is an eminence,*" *&c.* 1800.—"It is not accurate that the eminence here alluded to could be seen from our orchard seat. It arises above the road by the side of Grasmere Lake, towards Keswick, and its name is Stone Arthur."

Point Rash Judgment, 1800.—"The character of the eastern shore of Grasmere Lake is quite changed since these verses were written, by the public road being carried along its side. The friends spoken of were Coleridge and my sister, and the fact occurred strictly as recorded."

To Mary Hutchinson.—"Two years before our marriage. The pool alluded to is in Rydal Upper Park."

---

[1] Vol. ii. p. 1. 4, 5—9

On the 29th August, 1800, Coleridge paid a visit to the cottage at Grasmere. On the 29th September, Captain Wordsworth left it. On the 30th September the notes and preface to the new edition of the "Lyrical Ballads" were written; and the two volumes appeared at the close of the year.

The feelings and aims, with which these poems were written and published, were not obvious to the world, and probably are not even now rightly understood by many readers. By some persons the "Lyrical Ballads" are regarded merely as pictures of beautiful nature, and a simple state of society; but the design of the Poet in the selection of his subjects, and the ends for which he laboured in treating them, deserve more attention than they appear generally to have received.

Under this impression I will here insert a letter, addressed by Mr. Wordsworth to the Rt. Hon. C. J. Fox, and sent to that distinguished person with a presentation copy of the "Lyrical Ballads" in 1801.

To the Right Hon. Charles James Fox.

"*Grasmere, Westmoreland,*
January 14*th*, 1801.

"Sir,

"It is not without much difficulty that I have summoned the courage to request your acceptance of these volumes. Should I express my real feelings, I am sure that I should seem to make a parade of diffidence and humility.

"Several of the poems contained in these volumes are written upon subjects which are the common property of all poets, and which, at some period of your life, must have been interesting to a man of your sensibility, and perhaps may still continue to be so. It would be highly gratifying to me to suppose that even in a single instance the manner in which I have treated these general topics should afford you any pleasure; but such a hope does not influence me upon the present occasion; in truth I do not feel it. Besides, I am convinced that there must be many things in this collection which may impress you with an unfavourable idea of my intellectual powers. I do not say this with a wish to degrade myself, but I am sensible that this must be the case, from the different circles in which we have moved, and the different objects with which we have been conversant.

"Being utterly unknown to you as I am, I am well aware that if I am justified in writing to you at all, it is necessary my letter should be short; but I have feelings within me, which I hope will so far show themselves, as to excuse the trespass which I am afraid I shall make.

"In common with the whole of the English people, I have observed in your public character a constant predominance of sensibility of heart. Necessitated as you have been from your public situation to have much to do with men in bodies, and in classes, and accordingly to contemplate them in that relation, it has been your praise that you have not thereby been prevented from looking upon them as individuals, and that you have habitually left your heart open to be influenced by them in that capacity. This habit cannot but have made you dear to poets; and I am sure that if, since your first entrance into public life, there has been a single true poet living in England, he must have loved you.

"But were I assured that I myself had a just claim to the title of a poet, all the dignity being attached to the word which belongs to it, I do not think that I should have ventured for that reason to offer these volumes to you; at present it is solely on account of two poems in the second volume, the one entitled 'The Brothers,' and the other 'Michael,' that I have been emboldened to take this liberty.

"It appears to me that the most calamitous effect which has followed the measures which have lately been pursued in this country, is, a rapid decay of the domestic affections among the lower orders of society. This effect the present rulers of this country are not conscious of, or they disregard it. For many years past, the tendency of society, amongst almost all the nations of Europe, has been to produce it; but recently, by the spreading of manufactures through every part of the country, by the heavy taxes upon postage, by workhouses, houses of industry, and the invention of soup-shops, &c., superadded to the increasing disproportion between the price of labour and that of the necessaries of life, the bonds of domestic feeling among the poor, as far as the influence of these things has extended, have been weakened, and in innumerable instances entirely destroyed. The evil would be the less to be regretted, if these institutions were regarded only as palliatives to a disease; but the vanity and pride of their promoters are so subtly interwoven with them, that they are deemed great discoveries and blessings to humanity. In the meantime, parents are separated from their children, and children from their parents; the wife no longer prepares, with her own hands, a meal for her husband, the produce of his labour; there is little doing in his house in which his affections can be interested, and but little left in it that he can love. I have two neighbours, a man and his wife, both upwards of eighty years of age. They live alone. The husband has been confined to his bed many months, and has never had, nor till within these few weeks has ever needed, any body to attend to him but his wife. She has recently been seized with a lameness which has often prevented her from being able to carry him his food to his bed. The neighbours fetch water for her from the well, and do other kind offices for them both. But her infirmities increase. She told my servant two days ago, that she was afraid they must both be boarded out among some other poor of the parish (they have long been supported by the parish); but she said it was hard, having kept house together so long, to come to this, and she was sure that 'it would burst her heart.' I mention this fact to show how deeply the spirit of independence is, even yet, rooted in some parts of the country. These people could not express themselves in this way without an almost sublime conviction of the blessings of independent domestic life. If it is true, as I believe, that this spirit is rapidly disappearing, no greater curse can befall a land.

"I earnestly entreat your pardon for having detained you so long. In the two poems, 'The Brothers,' and 'Michael,' I have attempted to draw a picture of the domestic affections, as I know they exist among a class of men who are now almost confined to the north of England. They are small independent *proprietors* of land, here called statesmen, men of respectable education, who daily labour on their own little properties. The domestic affections will always be strong amongst men who live in a country not crowded with population, if these men are placed above poverty. But if they are proprietors of small estates, which have descended to them from their ancestors, the power, which these affections will acquire amongst such men, is inconceivable by those who have only had an opportunity of observing hired labourers, farmers, and the manufacturing poor. Their little tract of land serves as a kind of permanent rallying point for their domestic feelings, as a tablet upon which they are written, which makes them objects of memory in a thousand instances, when they would otherwise be forgotten. It is a fountain fitted to the nature of social man, from which supplies of affection, as pure as his heart was intended for, are daily drawn. This class of men is rapidly disappearing. You, Sir, have a consciousness, upon which every good man will congratulate you, that the whole of your public conduct has, in one way or other, been directed to the preservation of this class of men, and those who hold similar situations. You have felt that the most sacred of all property is the property of the poor. The two poems, which I have mentioned, were written with a view to show that men who do not wear fine clothes can feel deeply. "Pectus enim est quod disertos facit, et vis mentis. Ideoque imperitis quoque, si modo sint aliquo affectu concitati, verba non desunt." The poems are faithful copies from nature; and I hope whatever effect they may have upon you, you will at least be able to perceive that they may excite profitable sympathies in many kind and good hearts, and may in some small degree enlarge our feelings of reverence for our species, and our knowledge of human nature, by showing that our best qualities are possessed by men whom we are too apt to consider, not with reference to the points in which they resemble us, but to those in which they manifestly differ from us. I thought, at a time when these feelings are sapped in so many ways, that the two poems might co-operate, however feebly, with the illustrious efforts which you have made to stem this and other evils with which the country is labouring; and it is on this account alone that I have taken the liberty of thus addressing you.

"Wishing earnestly that the time may come when the country may perceive what it has lost by neglecting your advice, and hoping that your latter days may be attended with health and comfort,

"I remain,
"With the highest respect and admiration,
"Your most obedient and humble servant,
"W. WORDSWORTH."

Mr. Fox's reply was as follows:

"Sir,

"I owe you many apologies for having so long deferred thanking you for your poems, and your obliging letter accompanying them, which I received early in March. The poems have given me the greatest pleasure; and if I were obliged to choose out of them, I do not know whether I should not say that 'Harry Gill,' 'We are Seven,' 'The Mad Mother,' and 'The Idiot,' are my favourites. I read with particular attention the two you pointed out; but whether it be from early prepossessions, or whatever other cause, I am no great friend to blank verse for subjects which are to be treated of with simplicity. You will excuse my stating my opinion to you so freely, which I should not do if I did not really admire many of the poems in the collection, and many parts even of those in blank verse. Of the poems which you state not to be yours, that entitled 'Love' appears to me to be the best, and I do not know who is the author. 'The Nightingale' I understand to be Mr. Coleridge's, who combats, I think, very successfully, the mistaken prejudice of the nightingale's note being melancholy. I am, with great truth,

"Sir,
"Your most obedient servant,
(Signed) "C. J. Fox.

"*St. Ann's Hill, May* 25. [1801.]"

In connection with the above the following observations addressed by Wordsworth to some friends may find a place here.

Speaking of the poem of the *Leech-Gatherer*[1], sent in MS. he says:

"It is not a matter of indifference whether you are pleased with his figure and employment, it may be comparatively whether you are pleased with *this Poem;* but it is of the utmost importance that you should have had pleasure in contemplating the fortitude, independence, persevering spirit, and the general moral dignity of this old man's character."

And again, on the same poem:

"I will explain to you, in prose, my feelings in writing *that* poem. . . I describe myself as having been exalted to the highest pitch of delight by the joyousness and beauty of nature; and then as depressed, even in the midst of those beautiful objects, to the lowest dejection and despair. A young poet in the midst of the happiness of nature is described as overwhelmed by the thoughts of the miserable reverses which have befallen the happiest of all men, viz. poets. I think of this till I am so deeply impressed with it, that I consider the manner in which I was rescued from my dejection and despair almost as an interposition of Providence. A person reading the poem with feelings like mine will have been awed and controlled, expecting something spiritual or supernatural. What is brought forward? A lonely place, "a pond, by which an old man *was*, far from all house or home:" not *stood*, nor *sat*, but *was* — the figure presented in the most naked simplicity possible. This feeling of spirituality or supernaturalness is again referred to as being strong in my mind in this passage. How came he here? thought I, or what can he be doing? I then describe him, whether ill or well is not for me to judge with perfect confidence; but this I *can* confidently affirm, that though I believe God has given me a strong imagination, I cannot conceive a figure more impressive than that of an old man like this, the survivor of a wife and ten children, travelling alone among the mountains and all lonely places, carrying with him his own fortitude and the necessities which an unjust state of society has laid upon him. You speak of his speech as tedious. Every thing is tedious when one does not read with the feelings of the author. *The Thorn* is tedious to hundreds; and so is the *Idiot Boy* to hundreds. It is in the character of the old man to tell his story, which an impatient reader must feel tedious. But, good heavens! such a figure, in such a place; a pious, self-respecting, miserably infirm and pleased old man telling such a tale ! "

---

[1] Entitled "Resolution and Independence." Vol. ii. p. 124. See below, p. 189.

" Your feelings upon the 'Mother and the Boy, with the Butterfly,' were not indifferent: it was an affair of whole continents of moral sympathy.

" I am for the most part uncertain about my success in *altering* poems; but in this case," speaking of an insertion, " I am sure I have produced a great improvement."

Such is a specimen of an authentic report of the inward feelings with which these poems were composed. The author, it is clear, who wrote them, was not to be disturbed by the opinions pronounced on them by the world, especially as those opinions were remarkably inconsistent with each other; of which he gives the following amusing evidence at the close of a note sent by the waggon (Benjamin's waggon), which served as a post-mail, to his friend Coleridge, at Keswick.

" HARMONIES OF CRITICISM.

'*Nutting.*' Mr. C. W.: 'Worth its weight in gold.'	'*Nutting.*' Mr. S.: 'Can make neither head nor tail of it.'
'*Joanna.*' Mr. J. W.: 'The finest Poem of its length you have written.'	'*Joanna.*' Mr. S.: 'Can make nothing of it.'
'*Poet's Epitaph.*' Mr. Charles Lamb: 'The latter part pre-eminently good and your own.'	'*Poet's Epitaph.*' Mr. S.: 'The latter part very ill written.'

'Cumberland Beggar.'	*'Cumberland Beggar.'*
Mr. J. W.: 'Everybody seems delighted.'	Mr. Charles Lamb: 'You seem to presume your readers are stupid: the instructions too direct.'
'Idiot Boy.'	*'Idiot Boy.'*
Mr. J. W.: 'A lady, a friend of mine, could talk of nothing else: this, of all the poems, her delight.'	Mr. S.: 'Almost thrown by it into a fit with disgust: *cannot read it!*'

"But here comes the waggon.

"W. W."

Another edition of the "Lyrical Ballads" was published in 1802. Two of the poems, printed in the former editions, do not appear in this, viz., "The Dungeon," and "A Character." A new edition followed in 1805. All these editions are in 12mo.

CHAPTER XVIII.

RESIDENCE AT GRASMERE. — SHORT VISIT TO FRANCE.

Day after day passed on at the cottage, Grasmere, with little variation, except what was derived from seeing new scenes and composing new poems. The following brief notes, extracted from a diary kept by Miss Wordsworth, may serve to give a correct idea of the life there. This journal is full of vivid descriptions of natural beauty, as observed at Grasmere.

In perusing these extracts the reader will observe notices of the occasions on which several of Mr. Wordsworth's poems were composed.

"*Friday, October* 3. 1800. — Very rainy all the morning. William walked to Ambleside after dinner; I went with him part of the way.

" When William and I returned from accompanying Jones, we met an old man almost double. His face was interesting. He was of Scotch parents, but had been born in the army. He had had a wife, 'a good woman, and it pleased God to bless us with ten children;' all these were dead but one, of whom he had not heard for many years, a sailor. His trade was to gather leeches, but now leeches were scarce, and he had not strength for it. He had been hurt in driving a cart, his leg broke, his body driven over, his skull fractured; he felt no pain till he recovered from his first insensibility. It was then late in the evening when the light was just going away."

"*Oct.* 10. 1801. — Coleridge went to Keswick. — 11. Mr. and Mrs. Sympson came in after tea and supped with us.

[This Mr. Sympson was the clergyman of Wytheburn, a very interesting person. His character is drawn in the description of the graves of the Churchyard among the Mountains, in "The Excursion." [1]]

"*Oct.* 24. — Went to Greenhead Ghyll, and the Sheepfold. [Described in "Michael."]

"*Nov.* 6. — Coleridge came.

"*Nov.* 9. — Walked with Coleridge to Keswick.

"*Nov.* 18. — William walked to Rydal. . . . The lake of Grasmere beautiful. The church an image of peace; he wrote some lines upon it. . . . The mountains indistinct; the lake calm, and partly ruffled; a sweet sound of water falling into the quiet lake. A storm gathering in Easedale; so we returned; but the moon came out, and opened to us the church and village. Helm Crag in shade; the larger mountains dappled like a sky.

---

[1] The following note concerning one of this family is from Mr. Wordsworth's pen (vol. iii. p. 252.).

"'There bloomed the strawberry of the wilderness,
The trembling eyebright showed her sapphire blue.

"These two lines are in a great measure taken from 'The Beauties of Spring, a Juvenile Poem,' by the *Rev. Joseph Sympson.* He was a native of Cumberland, and was educated in the vale of Grasmere, and at Hawkshead school. His poems are little known, but they contain passages of splendid description; and the versification of his 'Vision of Alfred' is harmonious and animated. In describing the motions of the sylphs, that constitute the strange machinery of his Poem, he uses the following illustrative simile:

'Glancing from their plumes
A changeful light the azure vault illumes.
Less varying hues beneath the Pole adorn
The streamy glories of the Boreal morn,
That wavering to and fro their radiance shed
On Bothnia's gulf with glassy ice o'erspread,' &c. &c.

"He was a man of ardent feeling, and his faculties of mind, particularly his memory, were extraordinary. Brief notices of his life ought to find a place in the History of Westmoreland."

"*Nov.* 24. — Read Chaucer. We walked by Gell's cottage.[1] As we were going along we were stopped at once, at the distance perhaps of fifty yards, from our favourite birch tree: it was yielding to the gust of wind, with all its tender twigs; the sun shone upon it, and it glanced in the wind like a flying sunshiny shower: it was a tree in shape, with stem and branches, but it was like a spirit of water. . . . After our return William read Spenser to us, and then walked to John's grove. Went to meet W.

"*Jan.* 31. 1802.—We walked round the two lakes, Grasmere and Rydal. . . When I came with William, six and a half years ago, it was just at sunset, there was a rich yellow light on the waters, and the islands were reflected there; to-day it was grave and soft. The sun shone out before we reached Grasmere. We sat by the road-side, at the foot of the lake close by M.'s name. William cut it to make it plainer. . . .

"*Feb.* 5. — William came with two affecting letters from Coleridge, resolved to try another climate. . . . . Translated two or three of Lessing's fables. At this time William hard at work on *The Pedlar.*[2]

"*Feb.* 16. — Mr. Graham called; said he wished William had been with him the other day. He was riding in a post-chaise; heard a strange cry; called to the chaise-driver to stop. It was a little girl crying as if her heart would burst. She had got up behind the chaise, and her cloak had been caught by the wheel: she was crying after it. Mr. G. took her into the chaise, and the cloak was released, but it was torn to rags. It had been a miserable cloak before; but she had no other, and this was the greatest sorrow that could befal her. Her name was *Alice Fell.* At the next town Mr. G. left money to buy her a new cloak.

---

[1] Sir W. Gell's.

[2] The original name of "The Excursion."

"*Feb.* 19. — After tea I wrote out the first part of *Peter Bell.*

"*March, Wednesday.* W. reading Ben Jonson.

"*Thursday.* — W. writing the *Singing Bird*, or the *Sailor's Mother.* Mr. Clarkson came.

"*Friday.* — Read the remainder of Lessing. W. wrote *Alice Fell.*

"*Saturday.* — W. wrote the poem of the *Beggar Woman*, taken from a woman whom I had seen nearly two years ago, when he was absent at Gallow Hill, and had thus described: 'On Tuesday, May 27th, a very tall woman called at the door; she had on a very long brown cloak, and a very white cap without bonnet; she led a little bare-footed child about two years old by the hand, and said her husband was gone before with the other children. I gave her a piece of bread. Afterwards, on my road to Ambleside, beside the bridge at Rydal, I saw her husband sitting by the road-side, his two asses standing beside him, and the two young children at play upon the grass. The man did not beg. I passed on; and about a quarter of a mile further I saw two boys before me, one about ten, the other about eight years old, at play, chasing a butterfly. They were wild figures: the hat of the elder was wreathed round with yellow flowers; the younger, whose hat was only a rimless crown, had stuck it round with laurel leaves. They continued at play till I drew very near, and then they addressed me with the begging cant and the whining voice of sorrow. I said, "I served your mother this morning" (the boys were so like the woman who had called at our door that I could not be mistaken), "O," says the elder, "you could not serve my mother, for she's dead, and my father's on at the next town: he's a potter." I persisted in my assertion, and that I would give them nothing. Says the elder, "Come, let's away," and away they flew like lightning They had, however, sauntered so long in their road that they did not reach Ambleside before me, and I saw them go up to Matthew Harrison's house with their wallet upon the elder's shoulder, and creeping with a beggar's complaining foot. On my return from Ambleside I met, in the street, the mother driving her asses, in the two panniers on one of which were the two little children, whom she was chiding and threatening with a wand which she used to drive on her asses, while the little things hung in wantonness over the pannier's edge. The woman had told me in the morning that she was of Scotland, which her accent fully proved, and that she had lived (I think) at Wigtown; that they could not keep a house, and so they travelled.'"

This poem, the *Beggars*, presents a remarkable illustration of the fact that the sister's eye was ever on the watch to provide for the brother's pen. He had a most observant eye; and she also saw for him: and his poems are sometimes little more than poetical versions of her descriptions of the objects which she had seen; and he treated them as seen by himself.

"After tea I read W. the account I had written of the little boy belonging to the tall woman: and an unlucky thing it was, for he could not escape from those very words.

"Next morning at breakfast he wrote the poem *To a Butterfly:* the thought came upon him as we were talking about the pleasure we both always felt at the sight of a butterfly. I told him that I used in my childhood to chase them, but was afraid of *brushing the dust off their wings.*

"*Tuesday.* — W. went to the orchard and wrote a part of the *Emigrant Mother.* After dinner read Spenser.

"*March* 26. — W. altered the *Silver How* poem: wrote the *Rainbow.*

"*March* 28. — Went to Keswick. — 30. To Calvert's.

"*April* 1. — W. to Vale of Newlands, Borrowdale, back to Keswick: soft Venetian view. Calvert and Wilkinsons dined with us.

"*April* 7. — W. went to Middleham.

"*April* 12. — To-day W. (as I found the next day) was riding between Middleham and Barnard Castle."

Concerning this ride, Wordsworth writes to Coleridge: "I parted from M—— on Monday afternoon, about six o'clock, a little on this side Rushyford. Soon after I missed my road in the midst of the storm. . . Between the beginning of Lord Darlington's park at Raby, and two or three miles beyond Staindrop, I composed the poem on the opposite page.[1] I reached Barnard Castle about half-past ten. Between eight and nine next evening I reached Eusemere."

Miss Wordsworth thus proceeds:

"*April* 13. — William returned.

"*April* 15. — We set off after dinner from Eusemere, Mr. Clarkson's: wind furious: . . Lake (Ullswater) rough.

"When we were in the woods below Gowbarrow Park, we saw a few *Daffodils* close to the water-side. . . As we went along there were more and yet more; and at last, under the boughs of the trees, we saw there was a long belt of them along the shore. I never saw daffodils so beautiful. They grew among the mossy stones about them: some rested their heads on these stones as on a pillow; the rest tossed, and reeled, and danced, and seemed as if they verily laughed with the wind, they looked so gay and glancing.[2]

In reference to the poem of the "Daffodils," Wordsworth wrote as follows, some time afterwards, to his friend Wrangham:

---

[1] "The Glowworm."

[2] See the Poem (vol. ii. p. 103.):

"I WANDERED lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of *golden daffodils;*
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

"Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

" *Grasmere*, *Nov.* 4.

" My dear Wrangham,

" I am indeed much pleased that Mrs. Wrangham and yourself have been gratified by these breathings of simple nature; the more so, because I conclude from the character of the Poems which you have particularised that the Volumes cannot but improve upon you. I see that you have entered into the spirit of them. You mention the *Daffodils*. You know Butler, Montagu's friend; not Tom Butler, but the Conveyancer: when I was in town in spring he happened to see the Volumes lying on Montagu's mantle-piece, and to glance his eye upon the very poem of the 'Daffodils.' 'Aye,' says he, 'a fine morsel this for the Reviewers.' When this was told me (for I was not present), I observed that there were *two lines* in that little poem which, if thoroughly felt, would annihilate nine-tenths of the reviews of the kingdom, as they would find no readers; the lines I alluded to were these:

" The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed — and gazed — but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

" For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils."

"*They flash upon that inward eye*
Which is the bliss of solitude."[1]

But to return to Miss Wordsworth's diary.

"*April* 16. — The sun shone; the wind had passed away; the hills looked cheerful. . . . When we came to the *foot of Brother's Water*, left W., sitting on the *Bridge*. I went along the path on the right side of the lake: delighted with what I saw: the bare old trees, the simplicity of the mountains, and the exquisite beauty of the path . . . there was one grey cottage . . . Repeated the *Glowworm*[2] as I went along. When I returned, found W. writing a poem[3] descriptive of the sights and sounds we saw and heard. There was the gentle flowing of the stream, the glittering lake, a flat pasture with forty-two cattle feeding; to our left, the road leading to the hamlet; no smoke there, the sun shining on the bare roofs: the people at work, ploughing, harrowing, sowing; cocks crowing, birds twittering; the snow in patches at the top of the highest hills. . . W. finished his verses before we got to the foot of Kirkstone. Dined on Kirkstone. The view above Ambleside very beautiful; there we sat, and looked down on the vale. Rydal Lake was in evening stillness. . . Our garden at Grasmere very pretty in the half moonlight half daylight.

---

[1] These two lines were written by Mrs. Wordsworth. See below, p. 188. The Poem is entitled, "I wandered lonely as a cloud" (vol. ii. p. 103.), quoted above.

[2] *I. e.* a Poem beginning,

"Among all lovely things my love had been,"

on which Mr. Wordsworth records, in a letter to Coleridge, written April, 1802, "The incident of this poem took place about seven years ago between my sister and me. The poem was written in the spring of 1802.

[3] This effusion is entitled thus:

"WRITTEN IN MARCH,

"WHILE RESTING ON THE BRIDGE AT THE FOOT OF BROTHER'S WATER.

"The Cock is crowing,
The stream is flowing,
The small birds twitter,
The lake doth glitter,
The green field sleeps in the sun,"
&c. &c. (Vol. ii. p. 109.)

"*Tuesday, April* 20. — W. wrote conclusion to the *Poem to a Butterfly*, 'I've watched you,' &c. Coleridge came.

"*Wednesday, April* 28. — Copied the *Prioress' Tale.* W. in the orchard — tired. I happened to say that when a child I would not have pulled *a strawberry blossom*: left him, and wrote out the Manciple's tale. At dinner he came in with the poem on children gathering flowers.[1]

"*April* 30. — We went into the orchard after breakfast, and sat there. The lake calm, sky cloudy. W. began poem on the *Celandine.*

"*May* 1.—Sowed flower seeds: W. helped me. We sat in the orchard. W. wrote the *Celandine.* Planned an arbour: the sun too hot for us.

"*May* 7. — W. wrote the *Leech-Gatherer.*[2]

"*May* 21. — W. wrote two sonnets on *Buonaparte*, after I had read Milton's Sonnets to him.

"*May* 29.—W. wrote his Poem on going to M. H. I wrote it out.

"*June* 8. — W. wrote the poem '*The sun has long been set.*'

---

[1] The Poem entitled "Foresight," vol. i. p. 149.

[2] See above, p. 172.

"*June* 17. — W. added to the *Ode*[1] he is writing.

"*June* 19. — Read Churchill's Rosciad.

"*July* 9. — W. and I set forth to Keswick on our road to Gallow Hill (to the Hutchinsons, near Malton, York). On Monday, 11th, went to Eusemere (the Clarksons). 13th, walked to Emont Bridge, thence by Greta Bridge. The sun shone cheerfully, and a glorious ride we had over the moors; every building bathed in golden light: we saw round us miles beyond miles, Darlington spire, &c. Thence to Thirsk; on foot to the Hamilton Hills — Rivaux. I went down to look at the ruins: thrushes singing, cattle feeding among the ruins of the Abbey; green hillocks about the ruins; these hillocks scattered over with *grovelets* of wild roses, and covered with wild flowers. I could have stayed in this solemn quiet spot till evening without a thought of moving, but W. was waiting for me. Reached Hemsley at dusk: beautiful view of castle from top of the hill. — Friday, walked to Kirby; arrived at Gallow Hill at seven o'clock." They remained there till 26th July; then set off southward by Beverley, Hull, Lincoln, Peterborough, to London.

"*July* 30. — Left London between five and six o'clock of the morning outside the Dover coach. A beautiful morning. The city, St. Paul's, with the river — a multitude of little boats, made a beautiful sight as we crossed *Westminster Bridge*[2]; the houses not overhung by their clouds of smoke, and were spread out endlessly; yet the sun shone so brightly, with such a pure light, that there was something like the purity of one of Nature's own grand spectacles . . . Arrived at *Calais* at four in the morning of July 31st.

---

[1] "On Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Childhood," vol. v. p. 148.

[2] The Sonnet on Westminster Bridge was then written, on the roof of the Dover coach (vol. ii. p. 296.).

"Delightful walks in the evenings: seeing far off in the west the coast of England, like a cloud, crested with Dover Castle, the evening star, and the glory of the sky: the reflections in the water were more beautiful than the sky itself; purple waves brighter than precious stones for ever melting away upon the sands.

"On 29th Aug. left Calais at twelve in the morning for Dover . . . bathed, and sat on the Dover cliffs, and looked upon France: we could see the shores almost as plain as if it were but an English lake. Mounted the coach at half-past four; arrived in London at six. — 30th Aug. Stayed in London till 22d September: arrived at Gallow Hill on Friday, Sept. 24.

"On Monday, Oct. 4. 1802, W. was married at Brompton Church, to Mary Hutchinson . . . We arrived at Grasmere at six in the evening, on Oct. 6. 1802."

These brief notes from Miss Wordsworth's pen will give a general idea of the manner in which the daily life of the Poet and his sister, and of her who now was one with him in heart and soul, ministered occasions for poetical composition, and was invested with poetic interest and beauty.

The references to the poems composed at this period will be obvious to the reader, and they may be further illustrated by particulars derived from the Poet himself.[1]

Reverting then to some of the poems as mentioned in this chapter, we may specify, first,

---

[1] MSS. I. F.

Alice Fell.[1] — "Written 1802, to gratify Mr. Graham, of Glasgow, brother of the author of 'The Sabbath.' He was a zealous coadjutor of Mr. Clarkson, and a man of ardent humanity. The incident had happened to himself, and he urged me to put it into verse for humanity's sake. The humbleness, meanness, if you like, of the subject, together with the homely mode of treating it, brought upon me a world of ridicule by the small critics, so that in policy I excluded it from many editions of my Poems, till it was restored at the request of some of my friends, in particular my son-in-law, Edward Quillinan."

The Beggars.[2] — Town-End, 1802. "Met, and described to me by my sister, near the quarry at the head of Rydal Lake, a place still a chosen resort of vagrants travelling with their families."

To a Butterfly.[3] — Grasmere, Town-End. "Written in the orchard, 1802. My sister and I were parted immediately after the death of our mother, who died in March, 1778, both being very young."

My heart leaps up, &c.[4] — "This was written at Grasmere, Town-End."

I wandered lonely as a cloud.[5] — Town-End, 1804. *The Daffodils.* — "The two best lines in it are by M. W. The daffodils grew, and still grow, on the margin of Ullswater, and probably may be seen to this day as beautiful in the month of March, nodding their golden heads beside the dancing and foaming waves."

The Cock is crowing.[6] — "Extempore, 1802. This little poem was a favourite with Joanna Baillie."

---

[1] Vol. i. p. 154.

[2] Vol. ii. p. 111.

[3] Vol. i. p. 147. 208.

[4] Vol. i. p. 147.

[5] Vol. ii. p. 103.

[6] Vol. ii. p. 109.

To the small Celandine.[1] — Grasmere, Town-End. "It is remarkable that this flower coming out so early in the spring as it does, and so bright and beautiful, and in such profusion, should not have been noticed earlier in English verse. What adds much to the interest that attends it, is its habit of shutting itself up and opening out according to the degree of light and temperature of the air."

Resolution and Independence.[2] — Town-End, 1807. "This old man I met a few hundred yards from my cottage at Town-End, Grasmere; and the account of him is taken from his own mouth. I was in the state of feeling described in the beginning of the poem, while crossing over Barton Fell from Mr. Clarkson's, at the foot of Ullswater, towards Askham. The image of the hare I then observed on the ridge of the Fell."

Miscellaneous Sonnets, Part I. — *I grieved for Buonaparte.*[3] — "In the cottage of Town-End, one afternoon in 1801, my sister read to me the Sonnets of Milton. I had long been well acquainted with them, but I was particularly struck on that occasion with the dignified simplicity and majestic harmony that runs through most of them — in character so totally different from the Italian, and still more so from Shakspeare's fine sonnets. I took fire, if I may be allowed to say so, and produced three sonnets the same afternoon, the first I ever wrote, except an irregular one at school. Of these three the only one I distinctly remember is, 'I grieved for Buonaparte,' &c.; one of the others was never written down; the third, which was I believe preserved, I cannot particularise."

---

[1] Vol. ii. 32. 34.

[2] Vol. ii. p. 124. See above, p. 172.

[3] Vol. iii. p. 55.

The Ode.[1] — "This was composed during my residence at Town-End, Grasmere. Two years at least passed between the writing of the first four stanzas and the remaining part. To the attentive and competent reader the whole sufficiently explains itself, but there may be no harm in adverting here to particular feelings or *experiences* of my own mind on which the structure of the poem partly rests. Nothing was more difficult for me in childhood than to admit the notion of death as a state applicable to my own being. I have said elsewhere

'A simple child
That lightly draws its breath,
And feels its life in every limb,
What should it know of death?'

But it was not so much from the source of animal vivacity that *my* difficulty came as from a sense of the indomitableness of the spirit within me. I used to brood over the stories of Enoch and Elijah, and almost to persuade myself that, whatever might become of others, I should be translated in something of the same way to heaven. With a feeling congenial to this, I was often unable to think of external things as having external existence, and I communed with all that I saw as something not apart from, but inherent in, my own immaterial nature. Many times while going to school have I grasped at a wall or tree to racall myself from this abyss of idealism to the reality. At that time I was afraid of such processes. In later periods of life I have deplored, as we have all reason to do, a subjugation of an opposite character, and have rejoiced over the remembrances, as is expressed in the lines,

[1] Vol. v. p. 148.

'Obstinate questionings,' &c. To that dreamlike vividness and splendour which invest objects of sight in childhood, every one, I believe, if he would look back, could bear testimony, and I need not dwell upon it here; but having in the poem regarded it as presumptive evidence of a prior state of existence, I think it right to protest against a conclusion which has given pain to some good and pious persons, that I meant to inculcate such a belief. It is far too shadowy a notion to be recommended to faith as more than an element in our instincts of immortality. But let us bear in mind that, though the idea is not advanced in revelation, there is nothing there to contradict it, and the fall of man presents an analogy in its favour. Accordingly, a pre-existent state has entered into the popular creeds of many nations, and among all persons acquainted with classic literature is known as an ingredient in Platonic philosophy. Archimedes said that he could move the world if he had a point whereon to rest his machine. Who has not felt the same aspirations as regards the world of his own mind? Having to wield some of its elements when I was impelled to write this poem on the 'Immortality of the Soul,' I took hold of the notion of pre-existence as having sufficient foundation in humanity for authorising me to make for my purpose the best use of it I could as a Poet."

Poor Susan.[1] — Written 1801 or 1802. "This arose out of my observation of the affecting music of these birds, hanging in this way in the London streets during the freshness and stillness of the spring morning."

Foresight.[2] — "Also composed in the orchard, Grasmere, Town-End."

---

[1] Vol. ii. p. 104.

[2] Vol. i. p. 149.

The following letter from Mr. Wordsworth may serve as a conclusion to the present chapter.

To —— ——.

"My dear Sir,

"Had it not been for a very amiable modesty you could not have imagined that your letter could give me any offence. It was on many accounts highly grateful to me. I was pleased to find that I had given so much pleasure to an ingenuous and able mind, and I further considered the enjoyment which you had had from my Poems as an earnest that others might be delighted with them in the same, or a like manner. It is plain from your letter that the pleasure which I have given you has not been blind or unthinking; you have studied the poems, and prove that you have entered into the spirit of them. They have not given you a cheap or vulgar pleasure; therefore I feel that you are entitled to my kindest thanks for having done some violence to your natural diffidence in the communication which you have made to me.

"There is scarcely any part of your letter that does not deserve particular notice; but partly from some constitutional infirmities, and partly from certain habits of mind, I do not write any letters unless upon business, not even to my dearest friends. Except during absence from my own family I have not written five letters of friendship during the last five years. I have mentioned this in order that I may retain your good opinion, should my letter be less minute than you are entitled to expect. You seem to be desirous of my opinion on the influence of natural objects in forming the character of Nations. This cannot be understood without first considering their influence upon men in general, first, with reference to such objects as are common to all countries; and, next, such as belong exclusively to any particular country, or in a greater degree to it than to another. Now it is manifest that no human being can be so besotted and debased by oppression, penury, or any other evil which unhumanises man, as to be utterly insensible to the colours, forms, or smell of flowers, the [voices[1]] and motions of birds and beasts, the appearances of the sky and heavenly bodies, the general warmth of a fine day, the terror and uncomfortableness of a storm, &c. &c. How dead soever many full-grown men may outwardly seem to these things, all are more or less affected by them; and in childhood, in the first practice and exercise of their senses, they must have been not the nourishers merely, but often the fathers of their passions. There cannot be a doubt that in tracts of country where images of danger, melancholy, grandeur, or loveliness, softness, and ease prevail, that they will make themselves felt powerfully in forming the characters of the people, so as to produce an uniformity or national character, where the nation is small and is not made up of men who, inhabiting different soils, climates, &c., by their civil usages and relations materially interfere with each other. It was so formerly, no doubt, in the Highlands of Scotland; but we cannot perhaps observe much of it in our own island at the present day, because, even in the most sequestered places, by manufactures, traffic, religion, law, interchange of inhabitants, &c.,

---

[1] Parts of this letter have been torn, and words have been lost; some of which are here conjecturally supplied between brackets.

distinctions are done away, which would otherwise have been strong and obvious. This complex state of society does not, however, prevent the characters of individuals from frequently receiving a strong bias, not merely from the impressions of general nature, but also from local objects and images. But it seems that to produce these effects, in the degree in which we frequently find them to be produced, there must be a peculiar sensibility of original organisation combining with moral accidents, as is exhibited in 'THE BROTHERS' and in 'RUTH;' I mean, to produce this in a marked degree; not that I believe that any man was ever brought up in the country without loving it, especially in his better moments, or in a district of particular grandeur or beauty without feeling some stronger attachment to it on that account than he would otherwise have felt. I include, you will observe, in these considerations, the influence of climate, changes in the atmosphere and elements, and the labours and occupations which particular districts require.

"You begin what you say upon the 'Idiot Boy,' with this observation, that nothing is a fit subject for poetry which does not please. But here follows a question, Does not please whom? Some have little knowledge of natural imagery of any kind, and, of course, little relish for it; some are disgusted with the very mention of the words pastoral poetry, sheep or shepherds; some cannot tolerate a poem with a ghost or any supernatural agency in it; others would shrink from an animated description of the pleasures of love, as from a thing carnal and libidinous; some cannot bear to see delicate and refined feelings ascribed to men in low conditions in society, because their vanity and self-love tell them that these belong only to themselves, and men like themselves in dress, station, and way of life; others are disgusted with the naked language of some of the most interesting passions of men, because either it is indelicate, or gross, or vulgar; as many fine ladies could not bear certain expressions in the 'Mother' and the 'Thorn,' and, as in the instance of Adam Smith, who, we are told, could not endure the ballad of 'Clym of the Clough,' because the author had not written like a gentleman. Then there are professional and national prejudices for evermore. Some take no interest in the description of a particular passion or quality, as love of solitariness, we will say, genial activity of fancy, love of nature, religion, and so forth, because they have [little or] nothing of it in themselves; and so on without end. I return then to [the] question, please whom? or what? I answer, human nature as it has been [and ever] will be. But, where are we to find the best measure of this? I answer, [from with]in; by stripping our own hearts naked, and by looking out of ourselves to[wards men] who lead the simplest lives, and most according to nature; men who have never known false refinements, wayward and artificial desires, false criticisms, effeminate habits of thinking and feeling, or who having known these things have outgrown them. This latter class is the most to be depended upon, but it is very small in number. People in our rank in life are perpetually falling into one sad mistake, namely, that of supposing that human nature and the persons they associate with are one and the same thing. Whom do we generally associate with? Gentlemen, persons of fortune, professional men, ladies, persons who can afford to buy, or can easily procure books of half-a-guinea price, hot-pressed, and printed upon superfine paper.

These persons are, it is true, a part of human nature, but we err lamentably if we suppose them to be fair representatives of the vast mass of human existence. And yet few ever consider books but with reference to their power of pleasing these persons and men of a higher rank; few descend lower, among cottages and fields, and among children. A man must have done this habitually before his judgment upon the 'Idiot Boy' would be in any way decisive with me. I *know* I have done this myself habitually; I wrote the poem with exceeding delight and pleasure, and whenever I read it I read it with pleasure. You have given me praise for having reflected faithfully in my Poems the feelings of human nature. I would fain hope that I have done so. But a great Poet ought to do more than this; he ought, to a certain degree, to rectify men's feelings, to give them new compositions of feeling, to render their feelings more sane, pure, and permanent, in short, more consonant to nature, that is, to eternal nature, and the great moving spirit of things. He ought to travel before men occasionally as well as at their sides. I may illustrate this by a reference to natural objects. What false notions have prevailed from generation to generation of the true character of the Nightingale. As far as my Friend's Poem, in the 'Lyrical Ballads,' is read, it will contribute greatly to rectify these. You will recollect a passage in Cowper, where, speaking of rural sounds, he says,

> 'And *even* the boding Owl
> That hails the rising moon has charms for me.'

er was passionately fond of natural objects, yet he mentions it as a marvellous thing that he ct pleasure with the cry of the owl. In the same poem he speaks in the same manner of that beautiful plant, the gorse; making in some degree an amiable boast of his loving it '*unsightly*' and unsmooth as it is. There are many aversions of this kind, which, though they have some foundation in nature, have yet so slight a one, that, though they may have prevailed hundreds of years, a philosopher will look upon them as accidents. So with respect to many moral feelings, either of love or dislike. What excessive admiration was paid in former times to personal prowess and military success; it is so with the latter even at the present day, but surely not nearly so much as heretofore. So with regard to birth, and innumerable other modes of sentiment, civil and religious. But you will be inclined to ask by this time how all this applies to the 'Idiot Boy.' To this I can only say that the loathing and disgust which many people have at the sight of an idiot, is a feeling which, though having some foundation in human nature, is not necessarily attached to it in any virtuous degree, but is owing in a great measure to a false delicacy, and, if I may say it without rudeness, a certain want of comprehensiveness of thinking and feeling. Persons in the lower classes of society have little or nothing of this: if an idiot is born in a poor man's house, it must be taken care of, and cannot be boarded out, as it would be by gentlefolks, or sent to a public or private receptacle for such unfortunate beings. [Poor people] seeing frequently among their neighbours such objects, easily [forget] whatever there is of natural disgust about them, and have [therefore] a sane state, so that without pain or suffering they [perform] their duties towards them. I could with pleasure pursue this subject, but I must now strictly adopt the plan which

I proposed to myself when I began to write this letter, namely, that of setting down a few hints or memorandums, which you will think of for my sake.

"I have often applied to idiots, in my own mind, that sublime expression of scripture that '*their life is hidden with God.*' They are worshipped, probably from a feeling of this sort, in several parts of the East. Among the Alps, where they are numerous, they are considered, I believe, as a blessing to the family to which they belong. I have, indeed, often looked upon the conduct of fathers and mothers of the lower classes of society towards idiots as the great triumph of the human heart. It is there that we see the strength, disinterestedness, and grandeur of love; nor have I ever been able to contemplate an object that calls out so many excellent and virtuous sentiments without finding it hallowed thereby, and having something in me which bears down before it, like a deluge, every feeble sensation of disgust and aversion.

"There are, in my opinion, several important mistakes in the latter part of your letter which I could have wished to notice; but I find myself much fatigued. These refer both to the Boy and the Mother. I must content myself simply with observing that it is probable that the principal cause of your dislike to this particular poem lies in the *word* Idiot. If there had been any such word in our language, *to which we had attached passion*, as lack-wit, half-wit, witless, &c., I should have certainly employed it in preference; but there is no such word. Observe (this is entirely in reference to this particular poem), my 'Idiot' is not one of those who cannot articulate, and such as are usually disgusting in their persons:

> ‘*Whether in cunning or in joy,*
> *And then his words were not a few,*’ &c.

and the last speech at the end of the poem. The ‘Boy’ whom I had in my mind was by no means disgusting in his appearance, quite the contrary; and I have known several with imperfect faculties, who are handsome in their persons and features. There is one, at present, within a mile of my own house, remarkably so, though [he has something] of a stare and vacancy in his countenance. A friend of mine, knowing that some persons had a dislike to the poem, such as you have expressed, advised me to add a stanza, describing the person of the Boy [so as] entirely to separate him in the imaginations of my readers from that class of idiots who are disgusting in their persons; but the narration in the poem is so rapid and impassioned, that I could not find a place in which to insert the stanza without checking the progress of it, and [so leaving] a deadness upon the feeling. This poem has, I know, frequently produced the same effect as it did upon you and your friends; but there are many also to whom it affords exquisite delight, and who, indeed, prefer it to any other of my poems. This proves that the feelings there delineated are such as men *may* sympathise with. This is enough for my purpose. It is not enough for me as a Poet, to delineate merely such feelings as all men *do* sympathise with; but it is also highly desirable to add to these others, such as all men *may* sympathise with, and such as there is reason to believe they would be better and more moral beings if they did sympathise with.

“I conclude with regret, because I have not said one half of [what I intended] to say; but I am sure you will deem my excuse sufficient, [when I] inform you that my head aches violently, and I am in other respects unwell. I must, however, again give you my warmest thanks for your kind letter. I shall be happy to hear from you again: and do not think it unreasonable that I should request a letter from you, when I feel that the answer which I may make to it will not perhaps be above three or four lines. This I mention to you with frankness, and you will not take it ill after what I have before said of my remissness in writing letters.

"I am, dear Sir,
"With great respect,
"Yours sincerely,
"W. Wordsworth."

CHAPTER XIX.

MARRIAGE.

The preceding chapter brought Mr. Wordsworth to the eve of one of the most eventful eras of his life — his Marriage.

This is a subject on which no one can speak but in his own language; "a stranger intermeddleth not with his joy." But it may serve a useful purpose to refer to his words.

His marriage was full of blessings to himself, as ministering to the exercise of his tender affections, in the discipline and delight which married life supplies. The boon bestowed on him in the marriage-union was admirably adapted to shed a cheering and soothing influence upon his mind. And by the language in which he speaks of the blessing which he then received, he displays an example of true conjugal affection, graced with sweet and endearing charms of exquisite delicacy. He has thus rendered great service to society, which cannot too frequently be reminded how much of its happiness depends on the mutual love of married persons, and on the dignity and purity of that estate which was instituted by Almighty God in the time of man's innocency.

But let us listen to the Poet's own language. His marriage was founded on early intimacy, as the lines already noticed in "The Prelude" intimate.[1] Let us pass, then, at once, to that beautiful poem, mentioned in the last chapter, "The Farewell," in which he expresses his feelings on quitting the cottage of Grasmere, with his sister, before his marriage[1]: —

---

[1] See Prelude, p. 144., "Another maid there was," &c.

> "Farewell! thou little nook of mountain-ground,
> Farewell! we leave thee to Heaven's peaceful care,
> Thee and the cottage which thou dost surround.
> We go for *one* to whom ye will be dear;
> And *she* will prize this bower, this Indian shed,
> Our own contrivance, building without peer;
> A gentle maid . . .
> Will come to you, to you herself will wed,
> And love the blessed life that we lead here."

The beauty of this poem depends much on its being read, as the author observes generally, with a full appreciation of, and sympathy in, the emotion with which it was written. A knowledge of the circumstances under which it was composed is necessary. This remark applies to many other poems of the author; and if, by supplying the clue to these circumstances, the present work can enhance the pleasure and profit to be derived from them, its end is attained.

Let me next invite the reader to peruse the expressions poured forth from the author's heart in the lines

"She was a Phantom of delight,"[2]

---

[1] Vol. i. p. 209.

[2] Vol. ii. p. 100.: —

> "She was a Phantom of delight
> When first she gleamed upon my sight;
> A lovely Apparition, sent
> To be a moment's ornament;

written in the third year of his married life. From these verses let him proceed to the following lines in "The Prelude:"[1]

"When every day brought with it some new sense
Of exquisite regard for common things,
And all the earth was budding with these gifts
Of more refined humanity, thy breath,
Dear Sister! was a kind of gentler spring
That went before my steps. Thereafter came
One whom with thee friendship had early paired;

Her eyes as stars of Twilight fair;
Like Twilight's, too, her dusky hair;
But all things else about her drawn
From May-time and the cheerful Dawn;
A dancing Shape, an Image gay,
To haunt, to startle, and way-lay.

"I saw her upon nearer view,
A Spirit, yet a Woman too!
Her household motions light and free,
And steps of virgin-liberty;
A countenance in which did meet
Sweet records, promises as sweet;
A Creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food;
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.

"And now I see with eye serene
The very pulse of the machine;
A Being breathing thoughtful breath,
A Traveller between life and death;
The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill;
A perfect Woman, nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort, and command;
And yet a Spirit still, and bright
With something of angelic light."

[1] Page 364.

She came, no more a Phantom to adorn
A moment, but an inmate of the heart,
And yet a spirit there for me enshrined
To penetrate the lofty and the low;
Even as one essence of pervading light
Shines in the brightest of ten thousand stars,
And the meek worm that feeds her lonely lamp
Couched in the dewy grass."

Next let him turn to those pathetic lines prefixed as a dedication of "The White Doe,"[1] when domestic sorrow, in the loss of two beloved children, had put affection to the test, and had strengthened it with a holy power: let him read that dedication, and recognise there the sanctity and strength of wedded love.

Let him then pass to the two sonnets written at Oxford in 1820[2], when the Poet checks his fancy, which had almost transformed him into a youthful student, with cap and "fluttering gown:"

"She too at his side,
Who, with her heart's experience satisfied,
Maintains inviolate its slightest vow."

Other poems in succession will next present themselves:

"Let other bards of angels sing,"

and

"Yes, thou art fair,"

written in 1824[3], and

"Oh, dearer far than life and light are dear!"

---

[1] Vol. iv. p. 1.

[2] Vol. ii. p. 297. 298.

[3] Vol. i. p. 221—223.

the last of which will be read with peculiar interest, as showing, in a very touching manner, how the most powerful intellect may lean for support and guidance on the gentle meekness and unwavering faith of woman, and may derive strength and comfort from her fervent love and dutiful obedience.

The series may be closed with the inimitable lines "To a Painter,"[1] lines written after thirty-six years of wedded life, and testifying, in the language of the heart, that age does not impair true beauty, but adds new graces to it; in a word, that genuine beauty enjoys eternal youth.

---

[1] Vol. ii. 312, 313.

"TO A PAINTER (*Margaret Gillies*).

"All praise the Likeness by thy skill portrayed;
But 'tis a fruitless task to paint for me,
Who, yielding not to changes Time has made,
By the habitual light of memory see
Eyes unbedimmed, see bloom that cannot fade,
And smiles that from their birthplace ne'er shall flee
Into the land where ghosts and phantoms be;
And, seeing this, own nothing in its stead.
Couldst thou go back into far-distant years,
Or share with me, fond thought! that inward eye,
Then, and then only, Painter! could thy Art
The visual powers of Nature satisfy,
Which hold, whate'er to common sight appears,
Their sovereign empire in a faithful heart."

"*On the same Subject.*

"Though I beheld at first with blank surprise
This Work, I now have gazed on it so long
I see its truth with unreluctant eyes;
O, my Belovèd! I have done thee wrong,
Conscious of blessedness, but, whence it sprung,
Ever too heedless, as I now perceive:
Morn into noon did pass, noon into eve,
And the old day was welcome as the young,
As welcome, and as beautiful — in sooth
More beautiful as being a thing more holy:

Thanks to thy virtues, to the eternal youth
Of all thy goodness, never melancholy;
To thy large heart and humble mind, that cast
Into one vision, future, present, past."

CHAPTER XX.

TOUR IN SCOTLAND.

On the 14th August, 1803, Wordsworth and his sister left Grasmere for Keswick, where they visited Mr. Coleridge, who accompanied them in the beginning of a short tour which they made in Scotland.

The following particulars were furnished by Mr. Wordsworth, concerning this excursion and the poems suggested by it:

Memorials of a Tour in Scotland, 1803.[1]—"Mr. Coleridge, my sister, and myself, started together from Town-End, to make a tour in Scotland, August 14th.

"Coleridge was at that time in bad spirits, and somewhat too much in love with his own dejection, and he departed from us, as is recorded in my sister's journal, soon after we left Loch Lomond. The verses that stand foremost among these memorials were not actually written for the occasion, but transplanted from my Epistle to Sir G. Beaumont."

To the Sons of Burns.[2]—"See, in connection with these verses, two other poems upon Burns, one composed actually at the time, and the other, though then felt, not put into words till several years afterwards."

Ellen Irwin, or the Braes of Kirtle.[3]—"It may be worth while to observe, that as there are Scotch poems on this subject, in the simple ballad strain, I thought it would be both presumptuous and superfluous to attempt treating it in the same way; and accordingly, I chose a construction of stanza quite new in our language; in fact, the same as that of the 'Bürger's Leonora,' except that the first and third lines do not in my stanzas rhyme. At the outset, I threw out a classical image, to prepare the reader for the style in which I meant to treat the story, and so to preclude all comparison.

---

[1] MSS. I. F. See Poems, vol. iii. p. 1—39.

[2] Vol. iii. p. 8.

[3] Vol. iii. p. 10.

The Highland Girl.[1] — "This delightful creature, and her demeanour, are particularly described in my sister's journal. The sort of prophecy with which the verses conclude, has, through God's goodness, been realised; and now, approaching the close of my seventy-third year, I have a most vivid remembrance of her, and the beautiful objects with which she was surrounded. She is alluded to in the poem of 'The Three Cottage Girls,' among my continental memorials. In illustration of this class of poems, I have scarcely any thing to say but what is anticipated in my sister's faithful and admirable journal."

Address to Kilchurn Castle.[2] — "The first three lines were thrown off at the moment I first caught sight of the ruin from a small eminence by the wayside; the rest was added many years after."

Rob Roy's Grave.[3] — "I have since been told that I was misinformed as to the burial-place of Rob Roy; if so, I may plead in excuse that I wrote on apparently good authority, namely, that of a well-educated lady, who lived at the head of the lake, within a mile, or less, of the point indicated as containing the remains of one so famous in that neighbourhood."

Sonnet composed at ——— Castle, 1803.[4] — "The castle here mentioned was Nidpath, near Peebles. The person alluded to was the then Duke of Queensbury. The fact was told me by Walter Scott."

---

[1] Vol. iii. p. 12.

[2] Vol. iii. p. 18.

[3] Vol. iii. p. 19.

[4] Vol. iii. p. 24.

Sonnet, "*Fly some kind harbinger.*" — "This was actually composed the last day of our tour, between Dalston and Grasmere."

The Blind Highland Boy. — "The story was told me by George Mackreth, for many years parish-clerk of Grasmere. He had been an eye-witness of the occurrence. The vessel in reality was a washing-tub, which the little fellow had met with on the shore of the loch."

The following extracts from the journal referred to by Mr. Wordsworth, will be interesting to the reader, as proceeding from the pen of his companion, and as supplying fresh illustration to the poems[1]: —

---

[1] The Itinerary of the Travellers was as follows: —

Day
1 Left Keswick; Grisdale; Mosedale; Hesket; Newmarket; Caldbeck Falls.
2. Rose Castle; Carlisle; Hatfield; Longtown.
3. Solway Moss; enter Scotland; Springfield; Gretna Green; Solway Frith; Annan; Dumfries.
4. Burns's Grave; Vale of Nith; Brown Hill; Poem to Burns's Sons.
5. Thornhill; Drumlanrigg; Turnpike-house; Sportsman; Wanloch-head; Lead Hills; Miners; Hopetoun Mansion; Hostess.
6. Road to Crawford John; Douglas Mill; Clyde; Lanark; Boniton Linn.

Day
7. Falls of the Clyde; Cartland Rocks; Trough of the Clyde; Fall of Stonebyers; Hamilton.
8. Hamilton House; Baroncleugh; Bothwell Castle; Glasgow.
9. Bleaching-ground; Road to Dumbarton.
10. Rock and Castle of Dumbarton; Vale of Leven; Smollett's Monument; Loch Lomond; Luss.
11. The Islands of Loch Lomond; Road to Tarbet.
12. Left Tarbet for the Trosachs; Rob Roy's Caves; Inversneyd Ferry-house and Waterfall; Singular Building; Loch Katrine;

“William and I parted from Mary on Saturday afternoon, August 14. 1803, and William, Coleridge,

---

Day

Glengyle; Mr. Macfarlane's.

13. Breakfast at Glengyle; Lairds of Glengyle; Burying-ground; Rob Roy; Ferryman's Hut; Trosachs; Return to the Ferryman's Hut.
14. Left Loch Katrine; Garrison-house; Highland Girls; Ferry-house of Inversneyd; Poem to the Highland Girl; Return to Tarbet.
15. Coleridge resolves to go home; Arrochar; Loch Long; Parted with C.; Cobler; Glen Croe; Glen Finlas; Cairndow.
16. Road to Inverary; Inverary.
17. Vale of Airey; Loch Awe; Kilchurn Castle; Dalmally.
18. Loch Awe; Teinmuilt; Bunawe; Loch Etive; Tinkers.
19. Road by Loch Etive downwards; Isle of Mull and Dunstaffnage; Loch Creven; Strath of Appin; Portnacruish; Islands of Loch Linnhe; Morven; Lord Tweedale; Strath of Doura; Ballahuilish.
20. Blacksmith's House; Glencoe; King's House.
21. Road to Inverorin; Inverorin; Public-house; Road to Tyndrum; Tyndrum; Loch Dochart.
22. Killin; Loch Tay; Kenmore.
23. Lord Breadalbane's grounds; Left Kenmore; Vale of Tay; Aberfeldy; Falls of Moness; Logareit; River Tummel; Vale of Tummel; Fascally; Blair.
24. Duke of Athol's Gardens; Falls of Bruar; Mountain road to Loch Tummel; Loch Tummel; River Tummel; River Garry; Tascally.
25. Walk to the Pass of Killicranky; Sonnet; Fall of the Tummel; Dunkeld; Fall of the Bran.
26. Duke of Athol's Gardens; Glen of the Bran; Rumbling Brig; Narrow Glen; Poem; Crieff.
27. Strath Earne; Lord Melville's House; Loch Earne; Strath Eyer; Loch Lubnich; Bruce; Pass of Leny; Callender.
28. Road to the Trosachs; Loch Vennachar; Loch Archy; Trosachs; Loch Katrine; Poem; Boatman's Hut.
29. Road to Loch Lomond; Ferry-house of Inversneyd; Road up Loch Lomond; Glenfaillach; Glen-

and I left Keswick on Monday morning, the 15th, at twenty minutes after eleven o'clock. The day was very hot. We walked up the hills and along all the rough road, which made our walking half the day's journey. Travelled under the foot of Carrock, a mountain entirely covered with stones on the lower part: above, it is very rocky, but sheep pasture there; we saw several, where there seemed no grass to tempt them, straggling here and there. Passed the foot of Grisdale and Mosedale, both pastoral valleys, narrow, and soon terminating in the mountains, green, with scattered trees and houses, and each a beautiful river."

"In the evening walked to Caldbeck Falls, a delicious spot in which to breathe out a summer's day: limestone rocks and caves, hanging trees, pools, and water-breaks."

"*Tuesday, August 16th.*—Passed Rose Castle, upon the Caldew, an ancient building of red stone, with sloping gardens, an ivied gateway, velvet lawns, old

---

Day
gyle; Rob Roy's Grave; Boatman's Hut.
30. Mountain Road to Loch Veol; Loch Voil; Poem, the Solitary Reaper; Strath Eyre.
31. Loch Lubnich; Callender; Stirling; Falkirk.
32. Linlithgow; Road to Edinburgh.
33. Edinburgh; Roslin.
34. Roslin; Hawthornden; Road to Peebles.
35. Peebles; Nidpath Castle;

Day
Sonnet; the River Tweed; Cloven Ford; Poem on Yarrow.
36. Melrose; Melrose Abbey.
37. Dryburgh; Jedburgh; Old Woman; Poem.
38. Vale of Jed.
39. Jedburgh; the Assizes; Vale of Tiviot; Hawick.
40. Vale of Tiviot; Branksholm; Moss Paul; Langholm.
41. Road to Longtown; River Esk; Carlisle.
42. Arrived at home.

garden walls, trim flower borders with stately and luxuriant flowers. We walked up to the house, and stood some minutes watching the swallows that flew about restlessly, and flung their shadows upon the sun-bright walls of the old building: the shadows glanced and twinkled, interchanged and crossed each other, expanded and shrunk up, appeared and disappeared, every instant,—as I observed to Wm. and C., seeming more like living things than the birds themselves. Dined at Carlisle: the town in a bustle with the assizes; so many strange faces that I had known in former times and recognised again, that it half seemed as if I ought to know them all; and together with the noise, the fine ladies, &c., they put me into confusion. This day Hatfield was condemned. I stood at the door of the gaoler's house, where he was; Wm. entered the house, and C. saw him. I fell into conversation with a debtor, who told me, in a dry way, that 'he was far over-learned;' and another man observed to Wm., that we might learn, from Hatfield's fate, 'not to meddle with pen and ink.' We gave a shilling to my companion, whom we found out to be a friend of the family, a fellow-sailor with my brother John in Captain Wordsworth's ship. Walked upon the walls of the city, which are broken down in places and crumbling away."

"*Wednesday, August 17th.*—Left Longtown after breakfast. About half a mile from town a guide-post and two roads—to Edinburgh and Glasgow: we took the left-hand road, namely, to Glasgow. Here we saw the first specimens of the luxuriance of the heather plant as it grows in Scotland: it was in the enclosed plantations (perhaps sheltered by them). These plantations appeared to be not well grown for their age; the trees were stunted, but growing irregularly: they reminded me of the Hartz forest, near Goslar, and I was pleased; besides, Wm. had spoken to me, two years before, of the pleasure he had received from the heather plant in that very spot. Afterwards the road treeless, over a peat-moss common (the Solway moss); here and there an earth-built hut, with its peat-stack, a scanty-growing willow hedge round the kail-garth, perhaps the cow pasturing near — a little lass watching it; the dreary waste cheered by the endless singing of larks. We enter Scotland by crossing the river Sark."

"Further on, though almost contiguous, is Gretna Green, upon a hill among trees. This sounds well, but it is a dreary place when you are in it; the stone houses dirty and miserable, with broken windows, &c. There is a pleasant view from the churchyard, over Solway Frith, to the Cumberland hills. Dined at Annan. On our left, as we travelled along, was the Solway Frith and the Cumberland mountains, but the near country very dreary. The houses by the road-side, which are built of stone, look comfortless and dirty; but we peeped into a clay biggin that was very *canny*, and I dare say will be as warm as a swallow's nest in winter. The town of Annan made me think of France and Germany; the houses often large and gloomy, the size of them outrunning the comfort. One thing which was like Germany pleased me, — the shopkeepers express their calling by some device or painting: bread-bakers have biscuits, loaves, cakes, painted on their window-shutters; blacksmiths, horses' shoes, iron tools, &c. &c.; and so on through all trades."

"*Thursday, August 18th.* — Went to the churchyard where Burns is buried: a bookseller accompanied us, of whom I had bought some little books for Johnny. He showed us first the outside of Burns's house, where he had lived the last three years of his life, and where he died. It has a mean appearance, and is in a by situation, whitewashed, dirty about the doors, as all Scotch houses are; flowering plants in the windows. Went on to visit his grave. He lies at a corner of the churchyard, and his second son, Francis Wallace, is beside him. There is no stone to mark the spot; but a hundred guineas have been collected, to be laid out in some sort of monument. 'There,' said the bookseller to us, pointing to a pompous monument a few yards off, 'there lies Mr. Such-a-one'[1] (I have forgotten the name), 'a remarkably clever man: he was an attorney, and hardly ever lost a cause he undertook. Burns made many a lampoon upon him; and there they rest, as you see.' We looked at the grave with many melancholy and painful reflections, repeating to each other his own verses: —

'Is there a man, whose judgment clear,
Can others teach the course to steer,
Yet runs, himself, life's mad career,
Wild as the wave;
Here let him pause, and, through a tear,
Survey this grave.

'The poor Inhabitant below
Was quick to learn and wise to know,
And keenly felt the friendly glow,
And softer flame;
But thoughtless follies laid him low,
And stained his name!'

---

[1] John Bushby.

The churchyard is full of grave-stones and expensive monuments in all sorts of fantastic shapes — obelisk-wise, pillar-wise, &c."

"When our guide had left us, we turned again to Burns's house. Mrs. Burns was not at home, being gone to spend some time by the sea-shore with her children. We spoke to the servant-maid at the door, who invited us in, and we sat down in the parlour. The walls were washed with a blue wash; on one side of the fire was a mahogany desk, opposite the window a clock, and over the desk a print from the 'Cotter's Saturday Night,' which Burns mentions in one of his letters having received as a present. The house was cleanly and neat in the inside, the stairs, of stone, scoured white, the kitchen on the right side of the passage, the parlour on the left. In the room above the parlour Burns died, and his son after him. The servant told us she had lived five years with Mrs. Burns, who was now in great sorrow for the death of '*Wallace.*' She said that Mrs. Burns's youngest son was at Christ's Hospital.

"We were glad to leave Dumfries, which is no cheerful place to them who do not love the bustle of a town that seems to be rising up into wealth. I could think of little but poor Burns, and his moving about on that 'unpoetic ground.' In our road to Brownhill, the next stage we passed Ellisland, at a little distance on our right, his farm-house: this we might have had more pleasure in looking at, if we had been near enough to it; but there is no thought surviving in connection with Burns's daily life that is not heart-depressing. Travelled through the vale of Nith, which is here little like a vale; it is so broad, with irregular hills rising up on each side, in outline resembling the valances of a bed."

"Crossed the Frith. The vale becomes narrow and very pleasant; corn-fields, green hills, clay cottages; the river's bed rocky, with woody banks. Left the Nith about a mile and a half, and reached Brownhill: a lonely inn where we slept."

"I cannot take leave of the country which we passed through to-day without mentioning that we saw the Cumberland mountains within half a mile of Ellisland (Burns's house), the last view we had of them. Drayton has prettily described the connection which the neighbourhood has with ours, when he makes Skiddaw say,

'Scurfell from the sky
That Annandale doth crown, with a most amorous eye,
Salutes me every day, or at my pride looks grim,
Oft threatening me with clouds, as I oft threatening him.'

These lines recurred to Wm.'s memory; and while he and I were talking of Burns, and the prospect he must have had, perhaps from his own door, of Skiddaw and his companions, we indulged ourselves in fancying that we might have been personally known to each other, and he have looked upon those objects with more pleasure for our sakes. We talked of Coleridge's children and family, then at the foot of Skiddaw, and our own new-born John a few miles behind it; and the grave of Burns's son, which we had just seen, by the side of that of his father; and some stories we had heard at Dumfries, respecting the dangers which his surviving children were exposed to, filled us with melancholy concern, which had a kind of connection with ourselves, and with thoughts some of which were afterwards expressed in the following supposed address to the sons of the ill-fated Poet:—

'Ye now are panting up life's hill!
'Tis twilight time of good and ill.'"

"*Friday, August* 19*th*. — William was not well to-day. Open country for a considerable way. Passed through Thornhill, a village built by the Duke of ——; the brother-houses so small that they might have been built to stamp a character of insolent pride on his own huge mansion of Drumlanrigg, which is full in view on the opposite side of the Nith. This mansion is indeed very large; but to us it appeared like a gathering together of little things: the roof is broken into a hundred pieces, cupolas, &c., in the shape of casters, conjurer's balls, cups, &c. &c. The situation would be noble if the woods had been left standing; but they have been cut down not long ago, and the hills above and below the house are left quite bare.

"About a mile and a half from Drumlanrigg is a turnpike-gate, at the top of a hill. We left our carriage with the man, and turned aside into a field, whence we looked down upon the Nith, which runs far below in a deep and rocky channel; the banks woody. The view was pleasant down the river towards Thornhill; an open country, corn-fields, pastures, and scattered trees."

"Travelled along a common for some miles before we joined the great road from Longtown to Glasgow."

"Left Douglas Mill at about three o'clock. Travelled through an open corn country; the tracts of corn large and unenclosed."

"We came to a moorish tract. Saw before us the hills of Loch Lomond; Ben Lomond and another distinct by themselves."

"Travelled for some miles along the open country, which was all without hedge-rows, sometimes arable, sometimes moorish, and often whole tracts covered with grunsel."

"After Wm. had left us he had taken a wrong road; and while he was looking about to set himself right, had met with a bare-footed boy, who said he would go with him. The little fellow carried him by a wild path to the upper of the falls, the *Boniton Linn;* and coming down unexpectedly upon it, he was exceedingly affected by the solemn grandeur of the place. This fall is not much admired, or spoken of by travellers: you have never a full breast-view of it; it does not make a complete self-satisfying place, an abode of its own, as a perfect waterfall seems to me to do; but the river, down which you look through a long vista of steep and ruin-like rocks, the roaring of the waterfall, and the solemn evening lights, must have been most impressive. One of the rocks on the near bank, even in broad daylight, as we saw it the next morning, is exactly like the fractured arch of an abbey: with the lights and shadows of evening upon it, the resemblance must have been much more striking. His guide was a pretty boy, and Wm. was exceedingly pleased with him."

"He conducted Wm. to the other fall; and as they were going along a narrow path they came to a small cavern, where Wm. lost him, and, looking about, saw his pretty figure in a sort of natural niche fitted for a statue, from which the boy jumped out, laughing, delighted with the success of his trick. Wm. told us a great deal about him, while we sat by the fire, and of the pleasure of his walk, often repeating, 'I wish you had been with me!'"

"The banks of the Clyde from Lanark to the falls rise immediately from the river: they are lofty and steep, and covered with wood. The road to the falls is along the top of one of the banks; and to the left you have a prospect of the open country, corn-fields, and scattered houses. To the right, over the river, the country spreads out, as it were, into a plain covered over with hills, no one hill much higher than another, but hills all over."

"We walked, after we had entered the private grounds through the gate, perhaps 200 yards upon a gravel carriage-road, then came to a little side-gate that opened on a narrow gravel path under trees, and in a minute and a half or less we came directly opposite to the great waterfall. I was much affected by the first view of it. The majesty and strength of the water (for I had never before seen so large a waterfall) struck me with a kind of stupid wonder."

"The waterfall (Cora Linn) is composed of two falls, with a sloping space which *appears* to be about twenty yards between, but is much more. The basin which receives the fall is enclosed by noble rocks, with trees, chiefly hazels, birch, and ashes, growing out of their sides wherever there is any hold for them; and a magnificent resting-place it is for such a river, — I think much more grand than the falls themselves. After having stayed some time, we returned by the same foot-path into the main carriage-road, and soon came upon what Wm. calls an ell-wide gravel walk, from which we had different views of the linn. We sat upon a bench, placed for the sake of one of these views, whence we looked down upon the waterfall and over the open country, and saw a ruined tower, called Wallace's Tower, which stands at a very little distance from the fall, and is an interesting object. A lady and gentleman, more expeditious tourists than we, came to the spot; they left us at the seat, and we found them again at another station above the falls. C., who is always good-natured enough to enter into conversation with anybody whom he meets in his way, began to talk with the gentleman, who observed that it was a '*majestic* waterfall.' C. was delighted with the accuracy of the epithet, particularly as he had been settling in his own mind the precise meaning of the words grand, majestic, sublime, &c., and had discussed the subject with Wm. at some length the day before. 'Yes, sir,' said C., 'it *is* a majestic waterfall.' 'Sublime and beautiful,' replied his friend. Poor C. could make no answer; and, not very desirous to continue the conversation, soon came to us, and related the circumstance, laughing heartily."

"After dinner set off towards Hamilton, but on foot, for we had to turn aside to the Cartland rocks, and our car was to meet us on the road. A guide attended us, who might almost in size, and certainly in activity, have been compared with Wm.'s companion who hid himself in the niche of the cavern."

"Our guide pointed to the situation of the Cartland crags. We were to cross a narrow valley, and walk down on the other side, and then we should be at the spot; but the little fellow made a sharp turn down a foot-path to the left, saying, 'We must have some conversation here.' He paddled with his little pawing feet till we came right opposite a gentleman's house on the other side of the valley, when he halted, repeating some words (I have forgotten what), which were taken up by the most distinct echo I ever heard: this is saying very little; it was the most distinct echo that it is possible to conceive."

"We had been told that the Cartland rocks were better worth going to see than the falls of the Clyde; but I did not think so; besides, I have seen places resembling it before, with clear water instead of that muddy stream; and I never saw any thing like the falls of the Clyde. It would be a delicious spot to have near one's own house; one would linger out many a long day in the cool shade of the caverns under the rocks; and the stream would soothe one by its murmuring, till, being an old friend, one would not love it the less for its homely face. Even we, as we passed along, could not help stopping for a long time to admire the beauty of the lazy foam, for ever in motion and never moved away, in a still place of the water, covering the whole surface of it with streaks and lines and ever-varying circles. Wild marjoram grew upon the rocks in great perfection and beauty. Our guide gave me a bunch, and said he should come hither to collect a store for tea for the winter, and that it was '*varra halesome*'— he drank none else. We walked, perhaps, half a mile along the bed of the river; but it might seem to be much further than it was, owing to the difficulty of the path, and the sharp and many turnings of the glen. Passed two of Wallace's caves. There is scarce a noted glen in Scotland that has not a cave for Wallace or some other hero."

"Travelled through the vale, or *Trough* of the Clyde, as it is called, for ten or eleven miles, having the river to our right. We had fine views, both up and down the river, for the first three or four miles, our road being not close to it, but above its banks, along the open country, which was here occasionally intersected by hedge-rows."

"We saw the fall from the top of the bank of the river at a little distance. It has not the imposing majesty of Cora Linn, but then it is left to itself, a grand solitude in the heart of a populous country. We had a prospect above and below it of cultivated grounds, with houses, haystacks, hills; but the river's banks were lonesome, steep, and woody, with rocks near the fall. A little further on came more in company with the river; sometimes we were close to it, sometimes above it, but always at no great distance; and now the vale became more interesting and amusing. It is very populous, with villages, hamlets, single cottages or farm-houses embosomed in orchards, and scattered over with gentlemen's houses, some of them very ugly, tall, and obtrusive, others neat and comfortable."

"*Monday, August* 22*d.*—Immediately after breakfast walked to the Duke of Hamilton's house to view the picture-gallery, chiefly the famous picture of Daniel in the Lions' Den, by Rubens. It is a large building without grandeur, a heavy lumpish mass, after the fashion of the Hopetoun House, only five times the size, and with far longer legs, which makes it gloomy. We entered the gate, passed the porter's lodge, where we saw nobody, and stopped at the front door, as Wm. had done two years before with Sir Wm. Rush's family."

"The Clyde is here an open river with low banks, and the country spreads out so wide that there is no appearance of a regular vale. Baroncleugh is in a beautiful steep glen, through which runs the river Avon, a stream that falls into the Clyde. The house stands very sweetly in complete retirement: it has its gardens and terraces one above another, with flights of steps between, box-trees and yew-trees cut in fantastic shapes, flower-borders and summer-houses, and below, apples and pears were still hanging in abundance on the branches of large old trees, which grew intermingled with the natural wood, elms, beeches, &c., even to the water's edge. The whole place is in perfect harmony with the taste of our ancestors; and the yews and hollies are shaven as nicely, and the gravel walks and flower-borders kept in as exact order, as if the spirit of the first architect of the terraces still presided over them. The opposite bank of the river is left in its natural wildness, and nothing was to be seen higher up but the deep dell, its steep banks being covered with fine trees; a beautiful relief or contrast to the garden, which is one of the most elaborate old things ever seen — a little hanging garden of Babylon. I was sorry to hear that the owner of this sweet place did not live there. He had built a small thatched house to eke out the old one: it was a neat dwelling, with no false ornaments. We were exceedingly sorry to leave this spot, which is left to nature and past times, and should have liked to have pursued the glen further up. We were told that there was an old ruined castle; and the walk must itself have been delightful: but we wished to reach Glasgow in good time, and had to go again to Hamilton House."

"Left Hamilton at about eleven o'clock. There is nothing interesting between Hamilton and Glasgow till we come to Bothwell Castle, a few miles from Hamilton. The country is cultivated but not rich, the fields large, a perfect contrast to the huddling together of hills and trees, corn and pasturage, haystacks, cottages, orchards, broom and gorse (but chiefly broom) that amused us so much the evening before in passing through the Trough of the Clyde. A native of Scotland would not, probably, be satisfied with the account I have given of the Trough of the Clyde, for it is one of the most celebrated scenes in Scotland. We certainly received less pleasure from it than we had expected; but it was plain that this was chiefly owing, though not entirely, to the unfavourable circumstances under which we saw it; a gloomy sky and a cold blighting wind. It is a very beautiful district, yet there, as in all the other scenes of Scotland celebrated for their fertility, we found something which gave us a notion of barrenness and of what was not altogether genial. The new fir and larch plantations had, as in almost every other part of Scotland, contributed not a little to this effect. Crossed the Clyde not far from Hamilton, and had the river, for some miles, at a distance from us on the left; but after having gone, it might be, three miles, we came to a porter's lodge on the left side of the road, where we were to turn to Bothwell Castle, which is in Lord Douglas's grounds."

"We saw the ruined castle embosomed in trees; passed the house, and soon found ourselves upon the edge of a steep brow, immediately above and overlooking the course of the river Clyde, through a deep hollow, between woods and green steeps. We had approached at right angles from the main road to this place, over a flat, and had seen nothing before us but a nearly level country, terminated by distant slopes, the Clyde hiding himself in his deep bed. It was exceedingly delightful to come thus unexpectedly upon such a beautiful region. The castle stands nobly, overlooking the Clyde; when we came to it, I was hurt to see that flower-borders had taken place of the natural overgrowings of the ruin, the scattered stones and wild plants. It is a large and grand pile, of red freestone, harmonising perfectly with the rocks of the river, from which no doubt it has been hewn. When I was a little accustomed to the unnaturalness of a modern garden I could not help admiring the excessive beauty and luxuriance of some of the plants, particularly the purple-flowered clematis, and a broadleaved creeping plant, without flowers, which scrambled up the castle-wall along with the ivy, and spread its vine-like branches so lavishly that it seemed to be in its natural situation; and one could not help thinking that, though not self-planted in the ruins of this country, it must, somewhere, have its native abode in such places."

"*Tuesday, August 23d.*—A cold morning. Walked to the bleaching ground, a large field, bordering on the Clyde, the banks of which are here perfectly flat, and the general face of the country is nearly so in the neighbourhood of Glasgow. This field, the whole summer through, is covered with women of all ages, children, and young girls, spreading out the linen, or watching it while it bleaches; the sight of them must be very cheerful on a fine day, but it rained when we were there, and though there was linen spread out in all parts, and great numbers of women and girls were at work, yet there would have been far more on a fine day, and they would have appeared happy, instead of stupid and cheerless. In the middle of the field is a large wash-house, whither the inhabitants of this large town, rich and poor, send or carry their linen to be washed. There are two very large rooms, with each a cistern in the middle for hot water, and all round the room are benches for the women to set their tubs upon. Both the rooms were crowded with washers, there might be a hundred, or two, or even three; for it is not easy to form an accurate notion of so great a number."

"Dined and left Glasgow at three o'clock in a heavy rain."

"We saw the Clyde, now a stately sea river, winding away mile after mile, spotted with boats and ships; each side of the river hilly, the right populous, with single houses and villages; Dunglass Castle upon a promontory; the whole view terminated by the rock of Dumbarton, at five or six miles distance, which stands by itself without any hills near it, like a wild sea-rock. We travelled for some time near the river, passing through clusters of houses which seemed to owe their existence to the wealth of the river, rather than the land, for the banks were mostly bare, and the soil appeared to be poor, even near the water. The left side of the river was generally uninhabited and moorish, yet there are some beautiful spots; for instance, a nobleman's house where the fields and trees are rich, and in combination with the river look very lovely. As we went along, William and I were reminded of the views upon the Thames in Kent, which, though greatly superior in richness and softness, are much inferior in grandeur. Not far from Dumbarton we passed under some rocky copse-covered hills, which were so like some of the hills near Grasmere that we could have half believed they were the same. Arrived at Dumbarton before it was dark."

"*Wednesday, August* 24*th.* — As soon as breakfast was over, William and I walked towards the castle, a short mile from the town. We overtook two young men who, on our asking the road, offered to conduct us, though, as it might seem, it was not easy to miss our way, for the rock rises singly by itself from the plain on which the town stands. The rock of Dumbarton is very grand when you are close to it; but at a little distance, under an ordinary sky, and in open day, it is

e Clyde, now a stately sea river, wind-
after mile, spotted with boats and
ɜ of the river hilly, the right populous,
es and villages; Dunglass Castle upon a
ɜ whole view terminated by the rock of
ive or six miles distance, which stands
ıt any hills near it, like a wild sea-
elled for some time near the river,
clusters of houses which seemed to
nce to the wealth of the river, rather
for the banks were mostly bare, and
d to be poor, even near the water.
the river was generally uninhabited
; there are some beautiful spots; for
man's house where the fields and trees
combination with the river look very
went along, William and I were re-
.ews upon the Thames in Kent, which,
superior in richness and softness, are
in grandeur. Not far from Dum-
,sed under some rocky copse-covered
re so like some of the hills near Gras-
ould have half believed they were the
l at Dumbarton before it was dark."

/, *August 24th.* — As soon as breakfast
ıiam and I walked towards the castle, a
n the town. We overtook two young
ur asking the road, offered to conduct us,
might seem, it was not easy to miss our
:ock rises singly by itself from the plain
town stands. The rock of Dumbarton
l when you are close to it; but at a little
ler an ordinary sky, and in open day, it is

not grand, but strange and curiously wild. The castle and fortifications add little effect to the general view of the rock, especially since the building of a modern house, which is whitewashed, and consequently jars, wherever it is seen, with the natural character of the place. There is a path up to the house, but it being low water, we could walk round the rock, which we determined to do. On that side next the town, green grass grows to a considerable height up the rock, but wherever the river borders upon it, it is naked stone. I never saw rock in nobler masses or more deeply stained by time and weather; nor is this to be wondered at, for it is in the very eye of sea storms and land storms, of mountain winds and water winds. It is of all colours, but a misty yellow predominates. As we walked along we could not but look up continually, and the mass above being on every side so huge, it appeared more wonderful than when we saw the whole together. We sat down on one of the large stones which lie scattered near the base of the rock, with sea-weed growing amongst them. Above our heads the rock was perpendicular for a considerable height, nay, as it seemed, to the very top; and on the brink of the precipice a few sheep (two of them rams with twisted horns) stood as if on the look-out over the wide country."

"The road to a considerable height is through a narrow cleft in which a flight of steps is hewn; the steps nearly fill it, and on each side the rocks form a high and irregular wall: it is almost like a long sloping cavern, only that it is roofed by the sky instead of stone. We came to the barracks; soldiers' wives were hanging out linen upon the rails, while the wind was beating about them furiously; there was nothing which it could set in motion but the garments of the women and the linen on the rails. The grass (for we had now come to green grass) was close and smooth, and not one blade an inch above another, and neither tree nor shrub. The standard pole stood erect without a flag. The rock has two summits, one much higher and broader than the other. When we were near to the top of the lower eminence, we had the pleasure of finding a little garden of flowers and vegetables belonging to the soldiers. There are three distinct and very noble prospects; the first, up the Clyde towards Glasgow, — Dunglass Castle seen on its promontory, boats, sloops, hills, and many buildings; the second, down the river to the sea, — Greenock and Port Glasgow, ships and the distant mountains at the entrance of Loch Long; and the third extensive and distinct view is up the Leven (which here falls into the Clyde) to the mountains of Loch Lomond. The distant mountains in all these views were obscured by mists and dingy clouds; but if the grand outline of any one of the views can be seen it is a sufficient recompence for the trouble of climbing the rock of Dumbarton."

" *Saturday, August 27th.* — At Glengyle. Mrs. Macfarlane, who was very diffident and no great talker, exclaimed, 'He was a *good* man, Rob Roy!' He had only been dead about eighty years, had lived in the next farm, which belonged to him, and there his bones were laid. He was a famous swordsman. Having an arm longer than other men, he had a greater command with his sword; as a proof of this, they told us, that he could garter his tartan stockings below the knee without stooping, and added a dozen different stories of single combats which he had fought, all in perfect good humour, merely to prove his prowess. I dare say they had stories of this kind which would hardly have been exhausted in the long evenings of a whole December week; Rob Roy being as famous here as even Robin Hood was in the forest of Sherwood: he also robbed from the rich, giving to the poor, and defending them from oppression. They tell of his confining the factor of the Duke of Montrose in one of the islands of Loch Katrine, after having taken his money from him (the duke's rents) in open day, while they were sitting at table. He was a formidable enemy of the duke, but being a small laird against a greater, was overcome at last, and forced to resign all his lands on the braes of Loch Lomond, including the caves, which we visited, on account of the money he had taken from the duke and could not repay. When breakfast was ended, the mistress desired the person whom we took to be her husband, 'to return thanks:' he said a short grace, and in a few minutes they all went off to their work. We saw them about the doors, following one another like a flock of sheep, with the children after, whatever job they were engaged in. Mrs. Macfarlane told me she would show me the burying-place of the lairds of Glengyle, and took me to a square enclosure like a pinfold, with a stone ball at every corner: we had noticed it the night before, and wondered what it could be. It was in the middle of a *planting*, as they call plantations, which was enclosed for the preservation of the trees; therefore we had to climb over a high wall. It was a dismal spot, with four or five graves overgrown with long grass, nettles, and brambles. Against the wall was a marble monument to the memory of one of the lairds, of whom they had spoken with veneration. Some English verses were inscribed upon the marble, purporting that he had been the father of his clan, a brave and good man."

"It was ten o'clock when we departed. We had learned that there was a ferry-boat three miles further, and if the man was at home he would row us down the lake to the Trosachs. Our walk was mostly through coppice-woods along a horse-road where narrow carts might travel. Passed that white house which had looked at us with such a friendly face when we were on the other side ; it stood on the slope of a hill with green pastures; below it, plots of corn and coppice-wood; and behind, a rocky steep covered with wood. It was a very pretty place, but the morning being cold and dull, the opposite shore appeared dreary. Near the white house we passed another of those little pinfold squares, which we knew to be a burying-place; it was in a sloping green field among woods, and within the sound of the beating of the water against the shore, if there were but a gentle breeze to stir it. I thought if I lived in that house, and my ancestors and kindred were buried there, I should sit for many an hour under the walls of this plot of earth where all the household would be gathered together. We found the ferryman at work in the field above his hut, and he was at liberty to go with us, but, being wet and hungry, we begged that he would let us sit by his fire till we had refreshed ourselves. This was the first genuine Highland hut we had been in; we entered by the cow-house, the house door being within at right angles to the outer door. The woman was exceedingly distressed that she had a bad fire, but she heaped up some dry peats and heather, and, blowing it with her breath, in a short time raised a blaze that scorched us into comfortable feelings. A small part of the smoke found its way out of the hole of the chimney, the rest through the open window-places, one of which was within the recess of the fire-place, and made a frame to a little picture of the restless lake and the opposite shore, seen when the outer door was open. The woman of the house was very kind: whenever we asked her for anything it seemed a fresh pleasure to her that she had it for us; she always answered with a softening down of the Scotch exclamation hoot, 'Ho! yes, ye'll get that,' and hied to the cupboard in the spence."

"*August* 28*th.* — When we were beginning to descend the hill towards Loch Lomond, we overtook two girls, who told us we could not cross the ferry till evening, for the boat was gone with a number of people to church. One of the girls was exceedingly beautiful; and the figures of both of them, in grey plaids falling to their feet, their faces only being uncovered, excited our attention before we spoke to them; but they answered us so sweetly that we were quite delighted, at the same time that they stared at us with an innocent look of wonder. I think I never heard the English language sound more sweetly than from the mouth of the elder of these girls, while she stood at the gate answering our inquiries, her face flushed with the rain: her pronunciation was clear and distinct, without difficulty, yet slow, as if like a foreign speech. They told us that we might sit in the ferry-house till the return of the boat, went in with us, and made a good fire as fast as possible to dry our wet clothes. We learnt that the taller was the sister of the ferryman, and had been left in charge with the house for the day; that the other was the wife's sister, and was come with her mother on a visit, an old woman who sat in a corner beside the cradle nursing her little grandchild. We were glad to be housed with our feet upon a warm hearth-stone; and our attendants were so active and good-humoured that it was pleasant to have to desire them to do anything. The younger was a delicate and unhealthy looking girl, but there was an uncommon meekness and goodness in her countenance, with an air of premature intelligence which is often seen in sickly young persons. The other made me think of Peter Bell's Highland girl:

'As light and beauteous as a squirrel,
As beauteous and as wild.'"

"We refreshed ourselves and had time to get our clothes quite dry before the arrival of the boat: the girls could not say at what time it would be at home. On our asking them if the church was far off, they replied, 'not very far:' when we asked *how* far, they said 'perhaps about four or five miles.' I believe a Church of England congregation would hold themselves excused for non-attendance three parts of the year having but half as far to go, but in the lonely parts of Scotland they make little of a journey of nine or ten miles to a preaching."

"The hospitality we had met with at the two cottages and Mr. Macfarlane's, gave us very favourable impressions on this our first entrance into the Highlands; and at this day, the innocent merriment of the girls, with their kindness to us, and the beautiful figure and face of the elder, come to my mind whenever I think of the ferry-house and waterfall of Loch Lomond; and I never think of the two girls but the whole image of that romantic spot is before me, a living image, as it will be to my dying day.

"The following Poem was written by William not long after our return from Scotland:

'Sweet Highland girl, a very shower
Of beauty is thy earthly dower!
Twice seven consenting years have shed
Their utmost bounty on thy head:
And these grey rocks; this household lawn;
These trees, a veil just half withdrawn;
This fall of water, that doth make
A murmur near the silent lake;
This little bay, a quiet road
That holds in shelter thy abode;
In truth together ye do seem
Like something fashioned in a dream;
Such forms as from their covert peep
When earthly cares are laid asleep.
Yet, dream and vision as thou art,
I bless thee with a human heart:
God shield thee to thy latest years!
I neither know thee nor thy peers;
And yet my eyes are filled with tears.'"

"Another merry crew took our place in the boat. We had three miles to walk to Tarbet; it rained, but not heavily; the mountains were not concealed from us by the mists, but appeared larger and more grand; twilight was coming on, and the obscurity under which we saw the objects, with the sounding of the torrents, kept our minds alive and wakeful: all was solitary and huge; sky, water, and mountains mingled together. While we were walking forward, the road leading us over the top of a brow, we all stopped suddenly at the sound of a half-articulate Gaelic hooting from the field close to us. It came from a little boy whom we could see on the hill between us and the lake wrapped up in a grey plaid. He was probably calling home the cattle for the night. His appearance was in the highest degree moving to the imagination: mists were on the hill-sides; darkness shutting in upon the huge avenue of mountains; torrents roaring; no house in sight to which the child might belong; his dress, cry, and appearance, all different from anything we had been accustomed to: it was a text, as William has since observed to me, containing in itself the whole history of the Highlander's life; his melancholy, his simplicity, his poverty, his superstition, and, above all, that visionariness which result from a communion with the unworldliness of nature."

"*Monday, August 29th.* — It rained heavily this morning; and having heard so much of the long rains since we came into Scotland, as well as before, we had no hope that it would be over in less than three weeks at the least, so poor C., being unwell, determined to send his clothes to Edinburgh and make the best of his way thither, being afraid to face so much wet weather. William and I were unwilling to be confined at Tarbet, so we resolved to go to Arrochar, a mile and a half on the road to Inverary, where there is an inn much celebrated as a place of good accommodation for travellers. C. and I set off on foot, and Wm. was to follow with the car, but a heavy rain coming on, C. left me to shelter in a hut to wait for Wm., and he went on before."

"*Tuesday, August 30th.*—When we had travelled about seven miles from Cairndow, winding round the bottom of a hill, we came in view of a great basin or elbow of the lake. We were completely out of sight of the long tract of water we had coasted, and seemed now to be on the edge of a very large, almost circular lake, the town of Inverary before us, a line of white buildings on a promontory right opposite and close to the water's edge; the whole landscape a showy scene, and bursting upon us at once."

"The houses are plastered or roughcast, and washed yellow, well built, well sized, and sash-windowed, bespeaking a connection with the duke, such a dependence as may be expected in a small town so near to his mansion; and indeed, he seems to have done his utmost to make them comfortable, according to our English notions of comfort. They are houses fit for people living decently on a decent trade; but the windows and doorsteads were as dirty as in a dirty by-street of a large town, making a most unpleasant contrast to the comely face of the buildings towards the water, and the ducal grandeur and natural festivity of the scene. Smoke and blackness are the wild growth of a Highland hut; the mud floors cannot be washed; the doorsteads are trampled by cattle; and if the inhabitants be not very cleanly it gives one little pain: but dirty people living in two-storied houses, with *dirty* sash-windows are a melancholy sight, which any where but in Scotland gives the notion either of vice or the extreme of wretchedness. Returning through the town we went towards the castle, and entered the duke's grounds by a porter's lodge, following the carriage-road through the park, which is prettily scattered over with trees, and slopes gently towards the lake."

"Behind the castle all the hills are planted to a great height, and the pleasure-grounds extend a considerable way up the valley of Airey. We continued our walk a short way up the river, and were sorry to see it stripped of its natural ornaments, after the fashion of Mr. Brown, and left to tell its tale (for it would not be silent like the river at Blenheim) to naked fields, and the planted trees on the hill-sides. We were disgusted with the stables, out-houses, or farm-houses, in different parts of the grounds behind the castle; they were broad, outspreading, fantastic, and unintelligible buildings. Sat in the park till the moonlight was felt more than the light of day; we then walked near the town by the water-side. I observed that the children who were playing did not speak Erse, but a much worse English than is spoken by those Highlanders whose common language is Erse. I went into the town to purchase tea and sugar to carry with us on our journey; we were tired when we returned to the inn, and I went to bed directly after tea. My room was at the very top of the house, one flight of steps after another; but when I drew back the curtains of my window I was repaid for the trouble of panting up stairs, by one of the most splendid moonlight prospects that can be conceived. The whole circuit of the hills, the castle, the two bridges, the tower on Dunicoich hill, and the lake, with many boats—fit scene for summer midnight festivities. I should have liked to see a bevy of Scottish ladies sailing with music in a gay barge. William, to whom I have read this, tells me that I have used the very words of Browne of Ottery, Coleridge's fellow townsman:

'As I have seen, when on the breast of Thames,
A heavenly bevy of sweet English dames,
In some calm evening of delightful May,
With music give a farewell to the day;
Or as they would (with an admired tone),
Greet night's ascension to her ebon throne.'[1]

"*Wednesday, August* 31*st.*—We had a long day's journey before us without a regular baiting-place on the road, so we breakfasted at Inverary, and did not set off till nine o'clock."

"William and I walked, and we had such confidence in our horse that we were not afraid to leave the car to his guidance, with the child in it. We were soon, however, alarmed at seeing him trot up the hill a long way before us; the child, having raised himself up upon the seat, was whipping him as hard as he could with a little stick he carried in his hand, and when he saw our eyes were on him he sat down, I dare say very sorry to resign his office. The horse slackened his pace, and no accident happened. When we had ascended half way up the hill, directed by a peasant, I took a nearer footpath, and at the top came in view of a most impressive scene; a ruined castle on an island almost in the middle of the last compartment of the lake, backed by a grand mountain cove, down which came a roaring stream. The castle occupied every foot of the island that was visible to us, appearing to rise out of the water; mists rested upon the mountain-side, with spots of sunshine between; there was a mild desolation in the low grounds, a solemn grandeur in the mountains, and the castle was wild yet stately, not dismantled of its turrets, nor the walls broken down, though completely in ruin. After having stood some minutes I joined William on the high road; and both wishing to stay longer near this place, we requested the man to drive his little boy on to Dalmally, about two miles further, and leave the car at the inn. He told us that the ruin was called Kilchurn Castle, that it belonged to Lord Breadalbane, and had been built by one of the ladies of that family for her defence during her lord's absence at the Crusades, for which purpose she levied a very heavy tax upon her tenants. He said, that on that side of the lake it did not appear, in very dry weather, to stand upon an island, but that it was possible to go over to it without being wet-shod. We were very lucky in seeing it after a great flood, for its enchanting effect was chiefly owing to its situation *in* the lake, — a decayed palace rising out of the plain of waters. I have called it a palace, for such feeling it gave to me, though, having been built as a place of defence, a castle or fortress. We turned again and reascended the hill, and sat a long time in the middle of it, looking on the castle and the huge mountain cove opposite; and Wm., addressing himself to the ruin, poured out these verses:

---

[1] Browne's Britannia's Pastorals.

> ‘Child of loud-throated war, the mountain-stream
> Roars in thy hearing; but thy hour of rest
> Is come, and thou art silent in thine age.’

We walked up the hill again, and, looking down the vale, had a fine view of the lake and islands, resembling the views down Windermere, though much less rich.”

“*Saturday, September 3d.*—When I have arrived at an unknown place by moonlight, it is never a moment of indifference when I greet it with the morning light, especially if the objects have appeared beautiful, or in any other way particularly impressive. I have kept back unwilling to go to the window that I might not lose the picture which I had taken to my pillow at night. So it was at Ballachullish: the place had appeared exceedingly wild by moonlight; I had mistaken corn-fields for naked rocks; and the lake had appeared narrower, and the hills more steep than they really were. We rose at six o'clock, and took a basin of milk before we set forward on our journey to Glen Coe. It was a delightful morning, the road excellent, and we were in good spirits, happy that we had no more ferries to cross, and pleased with the thought that we were going among the grand mountains which we saw before us at the head of the loch.”

“In comparing the impressions we had received at Glen Coe, we found that, though the expectations of both of us had been far surpassed by the grandeur of the mountains, yet we had, upon the whole, both been disappointed, and from the same cause: we had been prepared for images of terror; had expected a deep, glen-like valley with overhanging rocks, such as Wm. has described in those lines (speaking of the Alps):

> 'Brook and road
> Were fellow travellers in this gloomy pass,
> And with them did we journey several hours
> At a slow step.' "[1]

"The place had nothing of this character, the glen being open to the eye of day, the mountains retiring from it in independent majesty. Even in the upper part of it, where the stream rushed through the rocky chasm, it was but a deep trench in the vale, not the vale itself, and could only be seen when we were close to it."

"*Monday, September* 5*th.*—We arrived at Kenmore after sunset.

"*Tuesday, September* 6*th.*—Walked before breakfast in Lord Breadalbane's grounds which border upon the river Tay."

"*Wednesday, September* 7*th.* — Rose early and went before breakfast to the Duke of Athol's gardens and pleasure-grounds, where we completely tired ourselves with a three-hours' walk."

"We rested upon the heather seat, which Burns was so loath to quit that moonlight evening when he first went to Blair Castle; and I had a pleasure in thinking that he had been under the same shelter, and viewed the little waterfall opposite with some of the happy and pure feelings of his better mind."

---

[1] Prelude, book vi. p. 163.

"*Thursday*, *September* 8*th.* — Before breakfast we walked to the Pass of Killicranky. It is a very fine scene, the river Garry forcing its way down a deep chasm between rocks and high rugged hills covered with wood, and mountains above. It did not, however, impress us with awe, or a sensation of difficulty or danger, according to our expectations; but, the road being at a considerable height on the hill-side, we at first only looked into the dell or chasm. It is much grander seen nearer the river's bed. Everybody knows that this pass is famous in military history. When we were travelling in Scotland an invasion was hourly looked for, and one could not but think with some regret of the times when, from the now depopulated Highlands, forty or fifty thousand men might have been poured down for the defence of the country under such leaders as the Marquis of Montrose, or the brave man who had so distinguished himself upon the ground where we were standing. I will transcribe a sonnet suggested to Wm. by this place, written October, 1803.[1]

'Six thousand veterans practised in war's game,
Tried men, at Killicranky were arrayed
Against an equal host that wore the plaid,
Shepherds and herdsmen. Like a whirlwind came
The highlanders, the slaughter spread like flame;
And Garry, thundering down his mountain road,
Was stopped and could not breathe beneath the load
Of the dead bodies. 'Twas a day of shame
For them whom precept and the pedantry
Of cold mechanic battle do enslave.
Oh! for a single hour of that Dundee
Who on that day the word of onset gave!
Like conquest might the men of England see;
And their foes find a like inglorious grave.'"

---

[1] Vol. iii. p. 27.

"*Friday, September 9th.*—We had been undetermined respecting our future course when we came to Dunkeld, whether to go on directly to Perth and Edinburgh or to make a circuit and revisit the Trosachs. We decided upon the latter plan, and accordingly, after breakfast, set forwards towards Crieff, where we intended to sleep, and the next night at Callander."

"We baited at a lonely inn at the foot of a steep barren moor, which we had to cross; then, after descending considerably, came to the narrow glen which we had approached with no little curiosity, not having been able to procure any distinct description of it at Dunkeld."

"We entered the glen at a small hamlet at some distance from the head, left the car, and, turning aside a few steps, ascended a hillock which commanded a view to the top of it: a very sweet scene — a green valley, not very narrow, with a few scattered trees and huts, almost invisible by a misty gleam of afternoon light."

"The following poem was written by W. in consequence of a tradition relating to it, which we did not know when we went there.[1]

'In this still place, remote from men,
Sleeps Ossian in the narrow glen;
In this still place, where murmurs on
But one meek streamlet, only one,
He sang of battles, and the breath
Of stormy war, and violent death;

---

[1] Vol. iii. p. 14.

And should, methinks, when all was past,
Have rightfully been laid at last
Where rocks were rudely heaped, and rent
As by a spirit turbulent;
Where sights were rough and sounds were wild
And every thing unreconciled,
In some complaining dim retreat
Where fear and melancholy meet:
But this is calm; there cannot be
A more entire tranquillity.

'Does then the bard sleep here indeed?
Or is it but a groundless creed?
What matters it? I blame them not
Whose fancy in this lonely spot
Was moved, and in this way expressed
Their notion of its perfect rest.
A convent, e'en a hermit's cell,
Would break the silence of this dell.
It is not quiet, is not ease,
But something deeper far than these;
The separation that is here
Is of the grave, and of austere
And happy feelings of the dead;
And therefore was it rightly said
That Ossian, last of all his race,
Lies buried in this lonely place.'"

"*Sunday, September 11th.*—We have never had a more delightful walk than this evening. Ben Lomond, and the three sharp-crested mountains of Loch Lomond, which we had seen from the garrison, were very majestic under the clear sky; the lake was perfectly calm, the air sweet and mild. I felt how much more interesting it is to visit a place where we have been before than it can possibly be the first time, except under peculiar circumstances. The sun had been set for some time, when, being within a quarter of a mile of the ferryman's hut, our path leading us close to the shore of the calm lake, we met two neatly dressed women without hats, who had probably been taking their Sunday evening's walk. One of them said to us in a friendly soft tone of voice, 'What, you are stepping westward?' I cannot describe how affecting this simple expression was in that remote place, with the western sky in front, *yet* glowing with the departing sun. William wrote the following poem[1] long after in remembrance of his feelings and mine:

> '"*What, you are stepping westward?*" Yea,
> 'Twould be a *wildish* destiny,
> If we, who thus together roam
> In a strange land, and far from home,
> Were in this place the guests of chance:
> Yet who would stop or fear t' advance,
> Though home or shelter he had none,
> With such a sky to lead him on?'"

"We went up to the door of our boatman's hut as to a home, and scarcely less confident of a cordial welcome than if we had been approaching our own cottage at Grasmere. It had been a very pleasing thought, while we were walking by the side of the beautiful lake, that, few hours as we had been there, there was a home for us in one of its quiet dwellings. Accordingly, so we found it; the good woman, who had been at a preaching by the lake-side, was in her holiday dress at the door, and was rejoiced at the sight of us. She led us into the hut, in haste to supply our wants. We took once more a refreshing meal by her fire-side, and, though not so merry as the last time, we were not less happy, bating our regrets that Coleridge was not in his old place. I slept in the same bed as before, and listened to the household stream which now only made a very low murmuring."

---

[1] Vol. iii. p. 15.

"*Monday, September* 12*th.* — We descended into Glengyle at the head of Loch Ketterine, and passed through Mr. Macfarlane's grounds, that is, through the whole of the glen, where there was now no house left but his."

"We had sent the ferryman on before us from the head of the glen, to bring the boat round, from the place where we had left it, to the other side of the lake. Passed the second farm-house which we had such good reason to remember, and went up to the burying-ground which I have spoken of that stood so sweetly near the water-side. The ferryman had told us that Rob Roy's grave was there, so we could not pass on without going to the spot. There were several tombstones, but the inscriptions were either worn out, or unintelligible to us, and the place choked up with nettles and brambles. You will remember the description I gave of the situation of this place. I have nothing here to add except the following poem[1] which it suggested to Wm.

'A famous man is Robin Hood,
The English ballad-singer's joy;
And Scotland has a thief as good,
An outlaw of as daring mood;
She has her brave Rob Roy!'"

"*Tuesday, September* 13*th.*—Continued to walk for some time along the top of the hill, having the high mountains of Loch Voil before us, and Ben Lomond and the steeps of Loch Ketterine behind. We came to several deserted summer huts or shiels, and rested for some time beside one of them upon a hillock of its green plot of monumental herbage. Wm. here conceived the notion of writing an ode upon the affecting subject of those relics of human society which we found in that solitary and grand region. The spot of ground where we sat was very beautiful, the grass being uncommonly verdant and of a remarkably soft and silky texture. After this we rested no more till we came to the foot of the mountain, where there was a cottage, into which a woman invited me to enter and drink some whey: this I did, while Wm. went to inquire about the road at a new stone house a few steps further on."

---

[1] Vol. iii. p. 19.

"Near the head of the lake, at some distance from us, we espied the burial-place of the MacGregors, and did not see it without some interest, and its ornamental balls on the four corners of the wall, which I dare say have often been looked at with elevation of heart by our honest friend of Loch Ketterine. The lake is divided right across by a very narrow slip or line of flat land, making a small lake at the head of the large one. The whole may be about five miles long. As we descended, the scene became more fertile, our way being pleasantly varied, through coppices or open fields, and passing many farm-houses, though always with an intermixture of uncultivated ground. It was harvest time, and the fields were enlivened by many small companies of reapers. It is not uncommon in the more lonely parts of the Highlands, to see a single person so employed. The following poem[1] was suggested to Wm. by a beautiful sentence in Thomas Wilkinson's Tour in Scotland.

> 'Behold her single in the field,
> Yon solitary Highland lass,
> Reaping and singing by herself.
> Stop here, or gently pass.
> Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
> And sings a melancholy strain;
> Oh! listen, for the vale profound
> Is overflowing with the sound.'"

"*Friday, September 16th.* — When we found ourselves once again in the streets of Edinburgh we regretted bitterly the heavy rain; and, indeed, before we had left the hill, much as we were indebted to the accident of the rain for the peculiar grandeur and affecting wildness of those objects we saw, we could not but regret that the Frith of Forth and all the distant objects were entirely hidden from us, and we strained our eyes till they ached, vainly trying to pierce through the thick mist. We walked industriously through the streets, street after street, and in spite of wet and dirt, and an obscure view of every thing, were exceedingly delighted. The old town, with its irregular houses, stage above stage, hardly resembles the work of man; it is more like rock-work; but I cannot attempt to describe what we saw so imperfectly. I can only say that high as my expectations had been raised, the effect of the city of Edinburgh upon me far surpassed them. We would gladly have stayed another day, but could not afford more time, and we had such dismal notions of the rains of Scotland that we had no hope of its ceasing. So at about six o'clock in the evening we departed, intending to sleep at an inn in the village of Roslin, about five miles from Edinburgh. The rain continued till we were almost at Roslin, but then it was quite dark, so we did not see the castle that night."

---

[1] Vol. iii. p. 16.

"*September* 18*th*. — The town of Peebles is upon the banks of the Tweed. After breakfast we walked up the river to Nidpath Castle, about a mile and a half from the town. It stands upon a green hill overlooking the Tweed; a strong square-towered edifice, neglected and desolate, though not in ruin; the garden overgrown with grass, and the high walls that fenced it broken down. The gentle Tweed winds between green steeps, upon which, and close to the river-side, were many sheep pasturing; higher still are the grey mountains. But I need not describe this scene, for Wm. has done it far better than I could, in a sonnet[1] which he wrote the same day; at least, the five last lines of his poem will impart to you more of the *feeling* of the place than it would be possible for me to do.

'Ill wishes shall attend the unworthy lord,
Whom mere despite of heart could so far please,
And love of havoc (for with such disease
Fame taxes him), that he could send forth word
To level with the dust a noble horde,
A brotherhood of venerable trees,
Leaving an ancient dome and towers like these
Beggared and outraged!'"

"Being so near to the Yarrow when we were at

---

[1] Vol. iii. p. 24. Son. xii.

Clovenford, we could not but think of the possibility of going thither, and debated concerning it, but came to the conclusion of reserving the pleasure for some future time, in consequence of which, after our return, Wm. wrote the poem[1] which I shall here transcribe.

'From Stirling Castle we had seen
The mazy Forth unravelled;
Had trod the banks of Clyde and Tay,
And with the Tweed had travelled;
And when we came to Clovenford,
Then said my "winsome marrow,"
Whate'er betide, we'll turn aside
And see the Braes of Yarrow.'"

"The next day we were to meet Mr. Scott[1], and again join the Tweed. I wish I could have given you a better idea of what we saw since we left Peebles. I have most distinct recollections of the effect of the whole day's journey upon us; but the objects are melted together in my memory; and though I should recognise them if we revisit the place, I cannot call them out so as to represent them with distinctness. Wm., in attempting to describe this part of the Tweed, says of it,

'More pensive in sunshine
Than others in moonshine;'

which may, perhaps, give you more power to conceive what it is, than all I have said."

"*Monday, September* 19*th.* — Left the Galla, and, after crossing the open country, came again to the Tweed, and pursued our way as before near the river, perhaps for a mile or two, till we arrived at Melrose. The valley, for this short space, was not so pleasing as before; the hills were more broken, and though the cultivation was general, yet the scene was not rich, while it had entirely lost its pastoral simplicity. At Melrose the vale opens out wide, but the hills are high all round, single distinct risings. After breakfast we went out, intending to go to the abbey, and in the street met with Mr. Scott, who gave us a cordial greeting, and conducted us thither himself. There he was on his own ground, for he is familiar with all that is known of the authentic history of Melrose, and the popular tales connected with it. He pointed out many pieces of beautiful sculpture in obscure corners, which would have escaped our notice. The abbey has been built of a pale red stone, that part which was first erected of a very durable kind, the flowers and leaves being as perfect, in many places, as when they were first wrought. The ruin is of considerable extent, but, unfortunately, it is almost surrounded by mean houses, so that when you are close to it you see it entirely separated from any rural objects; and even when viewed from a distance, the situation does not seem to be particularly happy, for the vale is broken and disturbed, and the abbey at a distance from the river, so that you do not look upon them as companions of each other. And (surely this is a national barbarism) within these beautiful walls, is the ugliest church that ever was beheld. If it had been hewn out of the side of a hill it could not have been more dismal; there was no neatness nor even decency, and it appeared to be so damp, and so completely excluded from fresh air, that it must be dangerous to sit in: the floor is unpaved and very rough. What a contrast to the beautiful and graceful order which appears in every part of the ancient design and workmanship! Mr. Scott went with us into the gardens and orchard of Mr. Riddel, from which we had a very sweet view of the abbey, through trees, the town being entirely excluded. Dined with Mr. S. at the inn. He was now travelling to the assizes at Jedburgh, in his character of Sheriff of Selkirk; and for that cause, as well as for his own sake, he was treated with profound respect, a small part of which was vouchsafed to us as his friends, though I could not persuade the woman to show me the beds or to make any promise till she was assured from the sheriff himself, that he had no objection to sleep in the same room with Wm."

---

[1] Vol. iii. p. 24.

[2] Sir Walter Scott.

"*Tuesday*, *September* 20*th*. — "After this it rained so heavily that we could scarcely see anything. Crossed the Teviot by a stone bridge: the vale in that part wide. There was a great deal of ripe corn, but a want of trees, and no appearance of richness. Arrived at Jedburgh half an hour before the judges were expected out of court to dinner. We gave in our passport, the name of Mr. Scott, the sheriff, and were very civilly treated; but there was no vacant room in the house, except the Judge's sitting-room, and we wanted to have a fire, being exceedingly wet and cold. I was conducted into that room on condition that I would give it up the moment the Judge came from court. After I had taken off my wet clothes I went into a bed-room, and sat shivering till the people of the inn had procured lodgings for us in a private house. We were received with hearty welcome by a good old woman, who, though above seventy years of age, moved about as briskly as if she had been only seventeen."

"She was a most remarkable woman; the alacrity with which she ran up stairs when we rung, and guessed at and strove to prevent our wants, was surprising. She had a quick eye, strong features, and joyousness in her motions; I found afterwards that she had been subject to fits of dejection and ill health. We then guessed that her overflowing gaiety and strength might be in part attributed to the same cause as her former dejection. Her husband was deaf and infirm, and sat in a chair with scarcely the power to move a limb, an affecting contrast! The old woman said that they had been a very hard-working pair, indeed they had wrought like slaves at their trade (her husband had been a currier); and she told me how they had portioned off their daughters with money, and each a feather bed; and that in their old age, they had laid out the little they could spare in building and furnishing that house for lodgings; and then she added with pride, that she had lived in her youth in the family of Lady Egerton, who was no high lady, and now was in the habit of coming to her house whenever she was at Jedburgh, and a hundred other things; for when she once began with Lady Egerton, she did not know how to stop; nor did I wish it, for she was very entertaining. Mr. Scott sat with us an hour or two, and repeated a part of the 'Lay of the Last Minstrel.' When Mr. S. was gone, our hostess came to see if we wanted anything, and wish us good night. She had the same striking manner as before, and we were so much interested with her that Wm., long afterwards, expressed in verse the sensations which she had excited in him[1]:

---

[1] Vol. iii. p. 27.

'Age! twine thy brows with fresh spring flowers,
And call a train of laughing hours,
And bid them dance, and bid them sing,
And thou, too, mingle in the ring!'"

"*Wednesday, September* 21*st.* — The valley of the Jed is very solitary immediately under Furneyhurst. We walked down to the river, wading almost up to the knees in fern, which in many parts overspread the forest ground. It made me think of our walks at Alfoxden, and of *our own* park (though at Furneyhurst is no park at present), and the slim fawns that we used to startle from their couching-places among the fern at the top of the hill. We were accompanied in our walk by a young man from the Braes of Yarrow, an acquaintance of Mr. Scott's, who, having been much delighted with some of Wm.'s poems which he had chanced to see in a newspaper, had wished to be introduced to him. He lived at the most retired part of the Dale of Yarrow, where he had a farm. He was fond of reading, and well-informed, but at first meeting as shy as any of our Grasmere lads, and not less rustic in his appearance. He had been in the Highlands, and gave me such an account of Loch Rennoch, as made us regret exceedingly that we had not gone on, especially as he told us that the bad road ended at a very little distance from the place where we had turned back, and that we should have come into another good road, continued all along the shore of Loch Rennoch. He also mentioned that there was a very fine view from the steeple at Dunkeld."

"*Friday, September* 23*d.* Before breakfast walked with Mr. Scott along a high-road about two miles up bare hill. Hawick is a small town; it stands low. From the top of the hill whither we went, we had an extensive view over the moors of Liddisdale, and saw the Cheviot hills. We wished we could have gone with Mr. S. into some of the remote dales of this country, where in almost every house he can find a home. But after breakfast we were obliged to part with him, which we did with great regret; he would gladly have gone with us to Langholm, eighteen miles further."

"*September* 24*th.*—Rose very early and travelled about nine miles, to Longtown, before breakfast, along the banks of the Esk. About half-a-mile from Langholm crossed a bridge. At this part of the vale, which is narrow, the hills are covered with old oaks. Our road for some time through the wood; then came to a more open country, exceedingly rich and populous. The banks of the river frequently rocky and hung with wood; many gentlemen's-houses."

"We did not look along the white line of the road to Solway Moss without some melancholy emotion, though we had the fair prospect of the Cumberland mountains full in view, with the certainty, barring accidents, of reaching our dear home the next day. Breakfasted at the Graham's Arms. The weather had been very fine from the time of our arrival at Jedburgh, and this was a pleasant day. The sun 'shone fair on Carlisle walls' when we first saw them from the top of the opposite hills. Stopped to look at the place upon the sand near the bridge where Hatfield had been executed. Put up at the same inn as before, and were recognised by the woman who had waited on us.

Everybody spoke of Hatfield as an injured man. After dinner went to a village six miles further, where we slept.

"*September* 25*th*. — A beautiful autumnal day. Breakfasted at a public-house by the road-side; dined at Threlkeld; and arrived at home[1] between eight and nine o'clock, where we found Mary in perfect health, Joanna Hutchinson with her, and little John asleep in the clothes-basket by the fire."

Soon after his return to Grasmere, Wordsworth addressed a letter to Scott[2], from which the following are extracts:

" *Grasmere, Oct.* 16. 1803.

"We had a delightful journey home, delightful weather, and a sweet country to travel through. We reached our little cottage in high spirits, and thankful to God for all his bounties. My wife and child were both well, and, as I need not say, we had all of us a happy meeting. . . . We passed Branxholme (your Branxholme, we supposed) about four miles on this side of Hawick. It looks better in your poem than in its present realities. The situation, however, is delightful, and makes amends for an ordinary mansion. The whole of the Teviot, and the pastoral steeps about Mosspaul, pleased us exceedingly. The Esk, below Langholm, is a delicious river, and we saw it to great advantage. We did not omit noticing Johnnie Armstrong's Keep; but his hanging-place, to our great regret, we missed. We were, indeed, most truly sorry that we could not have you along with us into Westmoreland. The country was in its full glory; the verdure of the valleys, in which we are so much superior to you in Scotland, but little tarnished by the weather; and the trees putting on their most beautiful looks. My sister was quite enchanted; and we often said to each other, 'What a pity Mr. Scott is not with us!' . . . I had the pleasure of seeing Coleridge and Southey at Keswick last Sunday. Southey, whom I never saw much of before, I liked much: he is very pleasant in his manner, and a man of great reading in old books, poetry, chronicles, memoirs, &c., particularly Spanish and Portuguese. . . . My sister and I often talk of the happy days that we spent in your company. Such things do not occur often in life. If we live, we shall meet again; that is my consolation when I think of these things. Scotland and England sound like division, do what we can; but we really are but neighbours, and if you were no further off, and in Yorkshire, we should think so. Farewell! God prosper you, and all that belongs to you! Your sincere friend, for such I will call myself, though slow to use a word of such solemn meaning to any one,

---

[1] Vol. iii. p. 30.

[2] I am indebted for this letter to Mr. Lockhart's Life of Sir Walter Scott, vol. ii. p. 165.

"W. WORDSWORTH."

To this letter Wordsworth adds a transcript of his Sonnet on Nidpath Castle, of which Scott had requested a copy. In the MS. (says Mr. Lockhart) it stands somewhat differently from the printed edition; but in that original shape Scott always recited it, and few lines in the language were more frequently in his mouth.

CHAPTER XXI.

SIR GEORGE H. BEAUMONT, BART.

In the year 1803, Wordsworth became intimate with Sir George H. Beaumont[1], whose family-name has been connected with literature from the days of Queen Elizabeth; and the friendship then commenced, which the Poet reckoned "among the blessings of his life,"[2] was continued with mutual affection, till one of the friends, Sir George, was removed by death in 1827. Their names will remain connected together, by tender ties and beautiful associations of nature and art, as long as the grounds of Coleorton retain their beauty, and the creations of Sir George's pencil preserve their colour, and the poems of Wordsworth are read.

The occasion of the friendship was an interesting one. Sir George, who was one of the first to discern the genius of Wordsworth, was residing in lodgings with Mr. Coleridge at Greta Hall, Keswick, in 1803, and was made aware of his intimacy with Wordsworth, and of their desire to live in neighbourhood to each other, for the gratification and benefit of intellectual intercourse and assistance. Actuated by love of literature, as well as by a feeling of sincere regard for the two poets, he desired to be the means of bringing about their plan. He chose a beautiful spot near Keswick (Applethwaite), which he purchased, and presented to Wordsworth, whom at that time he had not seen. In doing so, he entertained a hope that one day it would be the site of a residence for him, near Coleridge; and if this design had been realised, Wordsworth would have been associated by immediate neighbourhood with another person, pre-eminent for genius, learning, and industry, Robert Southey.

---

[1] He was a descendant of the celebrated dramatist, Francis Beaumont.

[2] Dedication to Lyrical Ballads, edit. 1815.

"I had," says Sir George, writing to Wordsworth on October 24th, 1803, "a most ardent desire to bring you and Coleridge together. I thought with pleasure on the increase of enjoyment you would receive from the beauties of nature, by being able to communicate more frequently your sensations to each other, and that this would be a means of contributing to the pleasure and improvement of the world, by stimulating you both to poetical exertions."

A beautiful sonnet[1], by Wordsworth, conveyed an acknowledgment of this thoughtful act of kindness:

"BEAUMONT! it was thy wish that I should rear
A seemly cottage in this sunny dell,
On favoured ground, thy gift, — where I might dwell
In neighbourhood with One to me most dear;
That, undivided, we, from year to year,
Might work in our high calling."

It is interesting to speculate on the probable results of the fulfilment of this design. However, it was not accomplished. Coleridge's health required change of climate; and, instead of taking up his abode in a glen in Cumberland, he was soon to be a voyager on the wide sea, and, after he had traversed it, to be enjoying the warmer breezes of the valleys of Sicily, and of the terraces and gardens of Malta.

---

[1] Vol. ii. p. 262.

A letter from Mr. Wordsworth to Sir George Beaumont, written in October, 1803, offers another expression of his gratitude, and supplies some other particulars, which show how great an effort it was to the Poet to *write*, and how fortunate, therefore, he was in having at hand, through life, pens ever ready to commit his thoughts to paper. If Providence had not blessed him with a wife, a sister, a wife's sister, and a daughter, whose lives were bound up in his life, as his was in theirs, and who felt, — what the world was slow in admitting, — that his poems were destined for immortality, and that it was no small privilege to be instrumental in conveying them to posterity, it is probable that many of his verses, muttered by him on the roads, or on the hills, or on the terrace-walks of his own garden, would have been scattered to the winds, like the plaintive accents of the deserted Ariadne on the coast of Naxos,

"Quæ cuncta aerii discerpunt irrita venti,"

or like the fugitive verses of the Sibyl on the rocky shores of Cumæ.

The following are extracts from the letter referred to:

To Sir George Beaumont, Bart.

"*Grasmere, Oct. 14th,* 1803.

"Dear Sir George,

"If any person were to be informed of the particulars of your kindness to me, — if it were described to him in all its delicacy and nobleness, — and he should afterwards be told that I suffered eight weeks to elapse without writing to you one word of thanks or acknowledgment, he would deem it a thing absolutely *impossible.* It is nevertheless true. This is, in fact, the first time that I have taken up a pen, not for writing letters, but on any account whatsoever, except once, since Mr. Coleridge showed me the writings of the Applethwaite estate, and told me the little history of what you had done for me, the motives, &c. I need not say that it gave me the most heartfelt pleasure, not for my own sake chiefly, though in that point of view it might well be most highly interesting to me, but as an act which, considered in all its relations as to matter and manner, it would not be too much to say, did honour to human nature; at least, I felt it as such, and it overpowered me.

"Owing to a set of painful and uneasy sensations which I have, more or less, at all times about my chest, I deferred writing to you, being at first made still more uncomfortable by travelling, and loathing to do violence to myself, in what ought to be an act of pure pleasure and enjoyment, viz., the expression of my deep sense of your goodness. This feeling was, indeed, so strong in me, as to make me look upon the act of writing to you, not as the work of a moment, but as a thing not to be done but in my best, my purest, and my happiest moments. Many of these I had, but then I had not my pen, ink, and paper before me, my conveniences, 'my appliances and means to boot;' all which, the moment that I thought of them, seemed to disturb and impair the sanctity of my pleasure. I contented myself with thinking over my complacent feelings, and breathing forth solitary gratulations and thanksgivings, which I did in many a sweet and many a wild place, during my late tour.

In this shape, procrastination became irresistible to me; at last I said, I will write at home from my own fireside, when I shall be at ease and in comfort. I have now been more than a fortnight at home, but the uneasiness I have mentioned has made me beat off the time when the pen was to be taken up. I do not know from what cause it is, but during the last three years I have never had a pen in my hand for five minutes, before my whole frame becomes one bundle of uneasiness; a perspiration starts out all over me, and my chest is oppressed in a manner which I cannot describe. This is a sad weakness; for I am sure, though it is chiefly owing to the state of my body, that by exertion of mind I might in part control it. So, however, it is; and I mention it, because I am sure when you are made acquainted with the circumstances, though the extent to which it exists nobody can well conceive, you will look leniently upon my silence, and rather pity than blame me; though I must still continue to reproach myself, as I have done bitterly every day for these last eight weeks.

. . . . . .

"It is now high time to speak of the estate, and what is to be done with it. It is a most delightful situation, and few things would give me greater pleasure than to realise the plan which you had in view for me, of building a house there. But I am afraid, I am sorry to say, that the chances are very much against this, partly on account of the state of my own affairs, and still more from the improbability of Mr. Coleridge's continuing in the country. The writings are at present in my possession, and what I should wish is, that I might be considered at present as steward of the land, with liberty to lay out the rent in planting, or any other improvement which might be thought advisable, with a view to building upon it. And if it should be out of my power to pitch my own tent there, I would then request that you would give me leave to restore the property to your own hands, in order that you might have the opportunity of again presenting it to some worthy person who might be so fortunate as to be able to make that pleasant use of it which it was your wish that I should have done.

"Mr. Coleridge informed me, that immediately after you left Keswick, he had, as I requested, returned you thanks for those two elegant drawings which you were so good as to leave for me. The present is valuable in itself, and I consider it as a high honour conferred on me. How often did we wish for five minutes' command of your pencil while we were in Scotland! or rather that you had been with us.

. . . . . .

"They are sadly remiss at Keswick in putting themselves to trouble in defence of the country; they came forward very cheerfully some time ago, but were so thwarted by the orders and counter-orders of the ministry and their servants, that they have thrown up the whole in disgust. At Grasmere, we have turned out almost to a man. We are to go to Ambleside on Sunday to be mustered, and put on, for the first time, our military apparel. I remain, dear Sir George, with the most affectionate and respectful regard for you and Lady Beaumont,

"Yours sincerely,
"W. WORDSWORTH.

"My sister will transcribe three sonnets[1], which I do not send you from any notion I have of their merit, but merely because they are the only verses I have written since I had the pleasure of seeing you and Lady Beaumont. At the sight of Kilchurn Castle, an ancient residence of the Breadalbanes, upon an island in Loch Awe, I felt a real poetical impulse: but I did not proceed. I began a poem (apostrophising the castle) thus:

'Child of loud-throated war! the mountain stream
Roars in thy hearing; but thy hour of rest
Is come, and thou art silent in thine age.'"

The apprehension of a French invasion, to which the concluding sentences refer, was then spread far and wide. "I have raised a corps of infantry at Coleorton," says Sir George, "and another of pioneers at Dunmow, and have my share in another of infantry at Haverhill. . . . I am delighted with your patriotic effusions, and, as I have your permission, shall send them to the papers. I give you the highest credit for your military exertions: . . . we must all come to it at last."

Wordsworth had cherished the hope of enjoying the society of Sir George Beaumont as a neighbour at Grasmere. Sir George, with a painter's eye, had remarked the beauties of that circular pool on Loughrigg which has been compared to the Italian Lake of

---

[1] Written at Nidpath, near Peebles, a mansion of the Duke of Queensbury: "Now as I live, I pity that great Lord," &c. To the Men of Kent: "Vanguard of Liberty, ye Men of Kent!" &c. (Vol. iii. p. 64.) Anticipation: "Shout, for a mighty victory is won!" &c. (Vol. iii. p. 66.)

Nemi, the *Speculum Dianæ*[1], and which lies at a little distance to the south of that eminence (at the south-west of Grasmere Lake), which Gray has pointed out as one of the most picturesque in that fair region. Sir George had intended to build a cottage-abode on its banks; and it was a long-cherished hope, both of himself and his friends, that he would do so. His refined taste, his love of literature and the arts, united with delicate tact, and, above all, with a liberal largeness of soul, and an unaffected admiration of whatever was great and good, would have made his residence in this country a public benefit.

Mr. Wordsworth has referred to that intention in the lines addressed to Sir George[2], where he speaks of Loughrigg Tarn: —

"Thus gladdened from our own dear Vale we pass,
And soon approach Diana's Looking-glass;
To Loughrigg Tarn — round, clear and bright as heaven,
Such name Italian Fancy would have given."

The Poet, contemplating the beauties of the Tarn which he describes, *imagines* the house to be already built by his friend:—

---

[1] Mr. Wordsworth thus describes Loughrigg Tarn (Guide through the Lakes, edit. London, 1835, page 24. Tarns): — "Of this class of miniature lakes, Loughrigg Tarn, near Grasmere, is the most beautiful example. It has a margin of green firm meadows, of rocks, and rocky woods, a few reeds here, a little company of water-lilies there, with beds of gravel or stone beyond; a tiny stream issuing neither briskly nor sluggishly out of it; but its feeding rills, from the shortness of their course, so small as to be scarcely visible. Five or six cottages are reflected in its peaceful bosom; rocky and barren steeps rise up above the ging enclosures; and the solemn pikes of Langdale overlook, n a distance, the low cultivated ridge of land that forms the thern boundary of this small, quiet, and fertile domain."

Vol. v. p. 6., beginning, "Far from our home."

> "A glimpse I caught of that abode, by thee
> Designed to rise in humble privacy . . .
> And thought in silence, with regret too keen,
> Of unexperienced joys, that might have been,
> Of neighbourhood, and intermingling arts,
> And golden summer-days uniting cheerful hearts."[1]

This design of Sir George was never accomplished. It failed in consequence of local circumstances, "which need not be particularised." The Tarn, which had become Sir George's property, was re-sold, and the purchase-money, placed by him at Mr. Wordsworth's disposal, was laid out by him in planting the yew-trees, which are now one of the most beautiful ornaments of Grasmere church-yard, and shroud the Poet's grave and that of his family.

The following communications exhibit a specimen of the communion of arts mentioned in the above poem, — a communion happily displayed afterwards to the world in the paintings from Sir George's hand, illustrative of Wordsworth's poems — "The Thorn," "The White Doe," "Peter Bell," and "Lucy Gray;" and also record the Poet's feelings toward his friend:

---

[1] The reader will recollect an interesting example of these "intermingling arts" in Mr. Wordsworth's verses (vol. ii. p. 264.) "Upon the sight of a beautiful picture painted by Sir G. H. Beaumont, Bart:"

> "Praised be the Art whose subtle power could stay
> Yon cloud, and fix it in that glorious shape;
> Nor would permit the thin smoke to escape,
> Nor those bright sunbeams to forsake the day;
> Which stopped that band of travellers on their way,
> Ere they were lost within the shady wood;
> And showed the Bark upon the glassy flood
> For ever anchored in her sheltering bay:"

and also in the verses on the picture of Peele Castle, painted by Sir George (vol. v. p. 126.).

To Sir George Beaumont, Bart.

"*Grasmere, July* 20. 1804.

"Dear Sir George,

. . . . . .

"A few days ago I received from Mr. Southey your very acceptable present of Sir Joshua Reynolds's Works, which, with the Life, I have nearly read through. Several of the Discourses I had read before, though never regularly together: they have very much added to the high opinion which I before entertained of Sir Joshua Reynolds. Of a great part of them, never having had an opportunity of *studying* any pictures whatsoever, I can be but a very inadequate judge; but of such parts of the Discourses as relate to general philosophy, I may be entitled to speak with more confidence; and it gives me great pleasure to say to you, knowing your great regard for Sir Joshua, that they appear to me highly honourable to him. The sound judgment universally displayed in these Discourses is truly admirable, — I mean the deep conviction of the necessity of unwearied labour and diligence, the reverence for the great men of his art, and the comprehensive and unexclusive character of his taste. Is it not a pity, Sir George, that a man with such a high sense of the *dignity* of his art, and with such industry, should not have given more of his time to the nobler departments of painting? I do not say this so much on account of what the world would have gained by the superior excellence and interest of his pictures, though doubtless that would have been very considerable, but for the sake of example. It is such an animating sight to see a man of genius, regardless of temporary gains, whether of money or praise, fixing his attention solely upon what is intrinsically interesting and permanent, and finding his happiness in an entire devotion of himself to such pursuits as shall most ennoble human nature. We have not yet seen enough of this in modern times; and never was there a period in society when such examples were likely to do more good than at present. The industry and love of truth which distinguish Sir Joshua's mind are most admirable; but he appears to me to have lived too much for the age in which he lived, and the people among whom he lived, though this in an infinitely less degree than his friend Burke, of whom Goldsmith said, with such truth, long ago, that —

> 'Born for the universe, he narrowed his mind,
> And to party gave up what was meant for mankind.'

I should not have said thus much of Reynolds, which I have not said without pain, but because I have so great a respect for his character, and because he lived at a time when, being the first Englishman distinguished for excellence in the higher department of painting, he had the field fairly open for him to have given an example, upon which all eyes needs must have been fixed, of a man preferring the cultivation and exertion of his own powers in the highest possible degree to any other object of regard.

" . . . How sorry we all are under this roof that we cannot have the pleasure of seeing you and Lady Beaumont down this summer! The weather has been most glorious, and the country, of course, most delightful. Our own valley in particular was last night, by the light of the full moon, and in the perfect stillness of the lake, a scene of loveliness and repose as affecting as was ever beheld by the eye of man. We have had a day and a half of Mr. Davy's company at Grasmere, and no more: he seemed to leave us with great regret, being post-haste on his way to Edinburgh. I went with him to Paterdale, on his road to Penrith, where he would take coach. We had a deal of talk about you and Lady Beaumont: he was in your debt a letter, as I found, and exceedingly sorry that he had not been able to get over to see you, having been engaged at Mr. Coke's sheep-shearing, which had not left him time to cross from the Duke of Bedford's to your place. We had a very pleasant interview, though far too short. He is a most interesting man. . . . .

"That Loughrigg Tarn, beautiful pool of water as it is, is a perpetual mortification to me when I think that you and Lady Beaumont were so near having a summer-nest there. This is often talked over among us; and we always end the subject with a feeling of regret. But I must think of concluding. My sister thanks Lady Beaumont for her last letter, and will write to her in a few days; but I must say to her myself how happy I was to hear that her sister had derived any consolation from Coleridge's poems and mine. I must also add how much pleasure it gives me that Lady Beaumont is so kindly so affectionately disposed to my dear and good sister, and also to the other unknown parts of my family. Could we but have Coleridge back among us again! There is no happiness in this life but in intellect and virtue. Those were very pretty verses which Lady Beaumont sent; and we were much obliged to her for them. . . . . . . Farewell. Believe me, with the sincerest love and affection for you and Lady Beaumont,

"Yours,
"WM. WORDSWORTH."

To Sir George Beaumont, Bart.

"*Grasmere, Aug.* 30. (?) 1804.

"Dear Sir George,

"Wednesday last, Mrs. Coleridge, as she may, perhaps, herself have informed you or Lady Beaumont, received a letter from Coleridge. I happened to be at Keswick when it arrived; and she has sent it over to us to-day. I will transcribe the most material parts of it, first assuring you, to remove anxiety on your part, that the contents are, we think, upon the whole, promising. He begins thus (date, June 5. 1804, Tuesday noon; Dr. Stoddart's, Malta):—'I landed, in more than usual health, in the harbour of Valetta, about four o'clock, Friday afternoon, April 18. Since then I have been waiting, day after day, for the departure of Mr. Laing, tutor of the only child of Sir A. Ball, our civil governor.'

. . . . . .

"My sister has to thank Lady Beaumont for a letter; but she is at present unable to write, from a violent inflammation in her eyes, which I hope is no more than the complaint going about: but as she has lately been over-fatigued, and is in other respects unwell, I am not without fear that the indisposition in her eyes may last some time. As soon as she is able, she will do herself the pleasure of writing to Lady Beaumont. Mrs. Wordsworth and Lady B.'s little god-daughter[1] are both doing very well. Had the child been a boy, we should have persisted in our right to avail ourselves of Lady Beaumont's goodness in offering to stand sponsor for it. The name of *Dorothy*, obsolete as it is now grown, had been so long devoted in my own thoughts to the first daughter that I might have, that I could not break this promise to myself — a promise in which my wife participated; though the name of *Mary*, to my ear the most musical and truly English in sound we have, would have otherwise been most welcome to me, including, as it would, Lady Beaumont and its mother. This last sentence, though in a letter to you, Sir George, is intended for Lady Beaumont.

. . . . . .

"When I ventured to express my regret at Sir Joshua Reynolds giving so much of his time to portrait-painting and to his friends, I did not mean to recommend absolute solitude and seclusion from the world as an advantage to him or anybody else. I think it a great evil; and indeed, in the case of a painter, frequent intercourse with the living world seems absolutely necessary to keep the mind in health and vigour. I spoke, in some respects, in compliment to Sir Joshua Reynolds, feeling deeply, as I do, the power of his genius, and loving passionately the labours of genius in every way in which I am capable of comprehending them. Mr. Malone, in the account prefixed to the Discourses, tells us that Sir Joshua generally passed the time from eleven till four every day in portrait-painting. This it was that grieved me, as a sacrifice of great things to little ones. It will give me great pleasure to hear from you at your leisure. I am anxious to know that you are satisfied with the site and intended plan of your house. I suppose no man ever built a house without finding, when it was finished, that something in it might have been better done. *Internal* architecture seems to have arrived at great excellence in England; but, I don't know how it is, I scarcely ever see the *outside* of a new house that pleases me. But I must break off. Believe me, with best remembrances from my wife and sister to yourself and Lady Beaumont,

---

[1] Dora Wordsworth, born Aug. 16. 1804.

"Yours,
"With the greatest respect and regard,
"W. WORDSWORTH.

"My poetical labours have been entirely suspended during the last two months: I am most anxious to return to them."

The following was written in 1811:—

"*August* 28. 1811, *Cottage*, 7 *minutes' walk from the seaside, near Bootle, Cumberland.*

"My dear Sir George,

"How shall I appear before you again after so long an interval? It seems that now I ought rather to begin with an apology for writing, than for not having written during a space of almost twelve months. I have blamed myself not a little; yet not so much as I should have done had I not known that the main cause of my silence has been the affection I feel for you; on which account it is not so easy to me to write upon trifling or daily occurrences to you as it would be to write to another whom I loved less. Accordingly these have not had power to tempt me to take up the pen; and in the mean while, from my more intimate concerns I have abstained, partly because I do not, in many cases, myself like to see the reflection of them upon paper, and still more because it is my wish at all times, when I think of the state in which your health and spirits may happen to be, that my letter should be wholly free from melancholy, and breathe nothing but cheerfulness and pleasure. Having made this avowal, I trust that what may be wanting to my justification will be made up by your kindness and forgiving disposition.

"It was near about this time last year that we were employed in our pleasant tour to the Leasowes and Hagley. The twelve months that have elapsed have not impaired the impressions which those scenes made upon me, nor weakened my remembrance of the delight which the places and objects, and the conversations they led to, awakened in our minds.

. . . . . .

"It is very late to mention, that when in Wales, last autumn, I contrived to pass a day and a half with your friend Price at Foxley. He was very kind, and took due pains to show me all the beauties of his place. I should have been very insensible not to be pleased with, and grateful for, his attentions; and certainly I was gratified by the sight of the scenes through which he conducted me.

. . . . . .

"I was less able to do justice in my own mind to the scenery of Foxley. You will, perhaps, think it is a strange fault that I am going to find with it, considering the acknowledged taste of the owner, viz. that, small as it is compared with hundreds of places, the domain is too extensive for the character of the country. Wanting both rock and water, it necessarily wants variety; and in a district of this kind, the portion of a gentleman's estate which he keeps exclusively to himself, and which he devotes, wholly or in part, to ornament, may very easily exceed the proper bounds, — not, indeed, as to the preservation of wood, but most easily as to every thing else. A man by little and little becomes so delicate and fastidious with respect to forms in scenery, where he has a power to exercise a control over them, that if they do not exactly please him in all moods and every point of view, his power becomes his law; he banishes one, and then rids himself of another; impoverishing and *monotonising* landscapes, which, if not originally distinguished by the bounty of nature, must be ill able to spare the inspiriting varieties which art, and the occupations and wants of life in a country left more to itself, never fail to produce. This relish of humanity Foxley wants, and is therefore to me, in spite of all its recommendations, a melancholy spot, — I mean that part of it which the owner keeps to himself, and has taken so much pains with. I heard the other day of two artists who thus expressed themselves upon the subject of a scene among our lakes: 'Plague upon those vile enclosures!' said one; 'they spoil every thing.' 'Oh,' said the other, 'I never *see* them.' Glover was the name of this last. Now, for my part, I should not wish to be either of these gentlemen; but to have in my own mind the power of turning to advantage, wherever it is possible, every object of art and nature as they appear before me. What a noble instance, as you have often pointed out to me, has Rubens given of this in that picture in your possession, where he has brought, as it were, a whole county into one landscape, and made the most formal partitions of cultivation, hedge-rows of pollard willows, conduct the eye into the depths and distances of his picture; and thus, more than by any other means, has given it that appearance of immensity which is so striking. As I have slipped into the subject of painting, I feel anxious to inquire whether your pencil has been busy last winter in the solitude and uninterrupted quiet of Dunmow. Most likely you know that we have changed our residence in Grasmere, which I hope will be attended with a great overbalance of advantages. One we are certain of — that we have at least one sitting-room clear of smoke, I trust, in all winds. . . . . . . Over the chimney-piece is hung your little picture, from the neighbourhood of Coleorton. In our other house, on account of the frequent fits of smoke from the chimneys, both the pictures which I have from your hand were confined to bed-rooms. A few days after I had enjoyed the pleasure of seeing, in different moods of mind, your Coleorton landscape from my fire-side, it *suggested* to me the following sonnet, which, having walked out to the side of Grasmere brook, where it murmurs through the meadows near the church, I composed immediately[1]:

'Praised be the art whose subtle power could stay
Yon cloud, and fix it in that glorious shape;

---

[1] Vol. ii. p. 264.

Nor would permit the thin smoke to escape,
Nor those bright sunbeams to forsake the day;
Which stopped that band of travellers on their way,
Ere they were lost within the shady wood;
And showed the bark upon the glassy flood
For ever anchored in her sheltering bay.'

. . . . .

"The images of the smoke and the travellers are taken from your picture; the rest were added, in order to place the thought in a clear point of view, and for the sake of variety. I hope Coleorton continues to improve upon you and Lady Beaumont; and that Mr. Taylor's new laws and regulations are at least *peaceably* submitted to. Mrs. W. and I return in a few days to Grasmere. We cannot say that the child for whose sake we came down to the sea-side has derived much benefit from the bathing. The weather has been very unfavourable: we have, however, contrived to see every thing that lies within a reasonable walk of our present residence; among other places, Mulcaster — at least as much of it as can be seen from the public road; but the noble proprietor has contrived to shut himself up so with plantations and chained gates and locks, that whatever prospects he may command from his stately prison, or rather fortification, can only be guessed at by the passing traveller. In the state of blindness and unprofitable peeping in which we were compelled to pursue our way up a long and steep hill, I could not help observing to my companion that the Hibernian peer had completely given the lie to the poet Thomson, when, in a strain of proud enthusiasm, he boasts,

'I care not, Fortune, what you me deny,
  You cannot rob me of free Nature's grace;
You cannot shut the windows of the sky,
  Through which Aurora shows her brightening face;
You cannot bar my constant feet to trace
  The woods and lawns by living stream,' &c.
(*Castle of Indolence.*)

The *windows of the sky* were not *shut*, indeed, but the business was done more thoroughly; for the sky was nearly shut out altogether. This is like most others, a bleak and treeless coast, but abounding in corn-fields, and with a noble beach, which is delightful either for walking or riding. The Isle of Man is right opposite our window; and though in this unsettled weather often invisible, its appearance has afforded us great amusement. One afternoon, above the whole length of it was stretched a body of clouds, shaped and coloured like a magnificent grove in winter when whitened with snow and illuminated by the morning sun, which, having melted the snow in part, has intermingled black masses among the brightness. The whole sky was scattered over with fleecy dark clouds, such as any sunshiny day produces, and which were changing their shapes and position every moment. But this line of clouds immoveably attached themselves to the island, and manifestly took their shape from the influence of its mountains. There appeared to be just span enough of sky to allow the hand to slide between the top of Snâfell, the highest peak in the island, and the base of this glorious forest, in which little change was noticeable for more than the space of half an hour. We had another fine sight one evening, walking along a rising ground, about two miles distant from the shore. It was about the hour of sunset, and the sea was perfectly calm; and in a quarter where its surface was indistinguishable from the western sky, hazy, and luminous with the setting sun, appeared a tall sloop-rigged vessel, magnified by the atmosphere through which it was viewed, and seeming rather to hang in the air than to float upon the waters. Milton compares the appearance of Satan to a *fleet* descried far off at sea. The visionary grandeur and beautiful form of this *single* vessel, could words have conveyed to the mind the picture which nature presented to the eye, would have suited his purpose as well as the largest company of vessels that ever associated together with the help of a trade wind in the wide ocean; yet not exactly so, and for this reason, that his image is a permanent one, not dependent upon accident.

"I have not left myself room to assure you how sincerely I remain,

"Your affectionate friend,
"W. WORDSWORTH."

Sir George Beaumont died on the 7th February, 1827, in the seventy-third year of his age, having bequeathed to Mr. Wordsworth an annuity of 100*l.*, to defray the expenses of a yearly tour. He was buried at Coleorton. It was his desire that no other epitaph should be inscribed on his monument except the particulars of his age and place of abode, and the words, "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord." But his friend, who survived him, could not restrain the emotions of his heart; and when, in November, 1830, he next visited the grounds of Coleorton, associated with some of his happiest hours and tenderest feelings, he poured forth[1] those Elegiac Musings[2] which delineate the virtues and graces of the departed, whom he had loved so well; and in 1837, in a distant land, when for the first time Wordsworth visited Rome, and on the day of his arrival there, nothing among the beauties and glories of the Eternal City, then opening on his view, so much moved him as the sight of the picturesque pine-tree rescued from destruction by his friend[1]:

---

[1] The following lines from these Musings are descriptive of Sir George's character. Speaking of his repugnance to any eulogy on his tomb, the Poet says:

"Such offering BEAUMONT dreaded and forbade,
A spirit meek in self-abasement clad.
Yet *here* at least, though few have numbered days
That shunned so modestly the light of praise,
His graceful manners, and the temperate ray
Of that arch fancy which would round him play,
Brightening a converse never known to swerve
From courtesy and delicate reserve;
That sense, the bland philosophy of life,
Which checked discussion ere it warmed to strife;
Those rare accomplishments, and varied powers,
Might have their record among sylvan bowers.
Oh, fled for ever! vanished like a blast
That shook the leaves in myriads as it passed;—
Gone from this world of earth, air, sea, and sky,
From all its spirit-moving imagery,
Intensely studied with a painter's eye,
A poet's heart; and, for congenial view,
Portrayed with happiest pencil, not untrue
To common recognitions while the line
Flowed in a course of sympathy divine;—
Oh! severed, too abruptly, from delights
That all the seasons shared with equal rights;—
Rapt in the grace of undismantled age,
From soul-felt music, and the treasured page
Lit by that evening lamp which loved to shed
Its mellow lustre round thy honoured head;
While Friends beheld thee give with eye, voice, mien,
More than theatric force to Shakspeare's scene."

[2] Vol. v. p. 140.

"When I learned the tree was living there,
Saved from the sordid axe by BEAUMONT's care,
Oh, what a gush of tenderness was mine!
The rescued pine-tree, with its sky so bright,
And cloud-like beauty, rich in thoughts of home,
Death-parted friends, and days too swift in flight,
Supplanted the whole majesty of Rome
(Then first apparent from the Pincian height)
Crowned with St. Peter's everlasting dome."

---

[1] Vol. iii. p. 163.

CHAPTER XXII.

CAPTAIN WORDSWORTH.

AMONG Wordsworth's "Poems on the naming of Places," is one beginning with these words[1]:

"When, to the attractions of the busy world
Preferring studious leisure, I had chosen
A habitation in this peaceful vale,
Sharp season followed of continual storm
In deepest winter, and, from week to week,
Pathway, and lane, and public road were clogged
With frequent showers of snow."

This was in the beginning of 1800. It has been already mentioned that at that time the Poet's second brother, Captain Wordsworth, about two years and eight months younger than William, was an inmate of his cottage:

"To abide
For an allotted interval of ease
Under my cottage roof, had gladly come
From the wild sea a cherished visitant."

The brothers had rarely met since their school-boy days; and it was a great delight to the Poet, to find in his sailor-brother, when he came to sojourn at Grasmere, a heart congenial to his own.

---

[1] Vol. ii. p. 9.

> "When thou hadst quitted Esthwaite's pleasant shore,
> And taken thy first leave of those green hills
> And rocks that were the play-ground of thy youth,
> Year followed year, *my Brother!* and we two[1],
> Conversing not, knew little in what mould
> Each other's mind was fashioned; and at length,
> When once again we met in Grasmere Vale,
> Between us there was little other bond
> Than common feelings of fraternal love.
> But thou, a School-boy, *to the sea hadst carried*
> *Undying recollections; Nature there*
> Was with thee; she, who loved us both, she still
> Was with thee; and even so didst thou become
> A *silent* Poet."

John Wordsworth left Grasmere on Michaelmas day, 1800, walking over by Grisedale Tarn to Paterdale, whence he would proceed to Penrith; he took leave of his brother William, near the Tarn, where Ullswater first comes in view; and he went to sea again, in the Abergavenny East-Indiaman, in the spring of 1801.

After his departure from Grasmere, the Poet discovered a track which had been worn by his brother's steps "pacing there unwearied and alone," during the winter weather, in a sheltering fir-grove above the cottage[2], and henceforth *that* fir-grove was known to the Poet's household by the name of "John's Grove," or "Brother's Grove:"

---

[1] Vol. ii. p. 10.

[2] *When to the attractions of the busy world*, 1805.—"The grove still exists, but the plantation has been walled in, and is not so accessible as when my brother John wore the path in the manner described. The grove was a favourite haunt with us all while we lived at Town-End."—*MSS., I. F.*

"And now
We love the fir-grove with a perfect love."[1]

Soon after John Wordsworth had left the cottage at Grasmere, the second edition of the "Lyrical Ballads" appeared. The sailor was preparing for a voyage to China; but his heart was often at Grasmere, and he felt a deep interest in his brother's works. The public paid little attention to them; and those Reviewers who did notice them, treated them, for the most part, with scorn. But the sailor was a better judge than the critics; and he delivered with prophetic discernment a clear-sighted prediction concerning them, which time has verified.

"I do not think," he writes to a friend, early in 1801, "that William's poetry will become popular for some time to come: it does not suit the present taste. I was in company the other evening with a gentleman, who had read the 'Cumberland Beggar.' 'Why,' says he, 'this is very pretty; but you may call it any *thing but poetry*.' The truth is, few people *read* poetry; they *buy* it for the name, read about twenty lines — the language is very fine, and they are content with praising the whole. Most of William's poetry *improves upon the second*, *third*, *or fourth reading*. Now, people in general are not sufficiently interested to try a second reading."

In another letter he thus expresses himself: "The poems *will become* popular *in time*, but it will be *by degrees*. The fact is, there are not a great many persons that will be pleased with them at first, but those that *are* pleased with them will be pleased *in a high degree*, and they will *be people of sense:* and this will have weight, and *then* people who neither understand, nor wish to understand, them, will praise them."

---

[1] Vol. ii. p. 11.

Again: he thus speaks: "My brother's poetry has a great deal to struggle against; but I hope it will overcome all: it is certainly *founded upon Nature, and that is the best foundation*."[1]

Writing to his sister from Portsmouth, on board the Abergavenny, he says, April 22. 1801: "We have the finest ship in the fleet: nobody can tell her from a 74-gun ship. The Bengal fleet have sailed with a fine breeze. . . . I thank you for the Poems which you have copied for me. I always liked the preface to "Peter Bell," and would be obliged to you, if you could send it to me. . . . As for the "Lyrical Ballads," *I do not give myself the smallest concern about them*. . . . I am certain they must sell. I shall write to you again before we sail."

It is interesting and instructive to contrast such language as this, proceeding from the pen of an East India captain, who had been sent to sea when a boy, with the verdicts pronounced on the same subject at the same time by literary censors of high reputation, by whom the public consented to be guided, and who, for the most part, derided the "Lyrical Ballads" as idle puerilities, and treated their author with disdain, and his readers with pity.

---

[1] Mr. Wordsworth's own remark, inserted in one of his Prefaces (vol. v. p. 223.), ought not to be forgotten here:

"If there be one conclusion more forcibly pressed upon us than another by the review which has been given of the fortunes and fate of poetical Works, it is this,—that every author, as far as he is great, and at the same time *original*, has had the task of *creating* the taste by which he is to be enjoyed: so has it been, so will it continue to be. This remark was long since made to me by the philosophical friend for the separation of whose poems from my own I have previously expressed my regret. The predecessors of an original genius of a high order will have smoothed the way for all that he has in common with them;—and much he will have in common; but, for what is peculiarly his own, he will be called upon to clear and often to shape his own road:—he will be in the condition of Hannibal among the Alps."

From this striking example the reflecting reader will learn to distrust contemporary opinions, and to take counsel with himself and with Nature; and he will feel satisfied, that if his judgments are based upon the enduring foundation of natural laws, then, although they may not be in unison with conventional usages and contemporary language, those judgments will ultimately prevail, and be sanctioned by the verdict of posterity. Trained in such discipline as this, the intellect may escape the danger of a servile subjection to popular fallacies and fashionable idolatries, and may live and breathe with satisfaction, in the air of liberty and truth.

In the Poem on the "Fir-Grove," Wordsworth expresses a hope that the day would come when his brother would return to the Vale of Grasmere, and to the quiet cottage,

"When we, and others whom we love shall meet
A second time in Grasmere's happy Vale."

It was Captain Wordsworth's intention to settle eventually at Grasmere, and to devote the surplus of his fortune (for he was not married) to his brother's use; so as to set his mind entirely at rest, that he might be able to pursue his poetical labours with undivided attention.[1]

---

[1] The following lines in that affecting Poem "The Brothers" (vol. i. p. 189.), receive additional interest, when read with reference to the Poet's own history and that of his brother.

Captain Wordsworth returned from the voyage on which he sailed in 1801; and in Nov. 1802, he writes

---

"And Leonard, chiefly for his Brother's sake,
Resolved to try his fortune on the seas.
. . . . .
Poor Leonard! when we parted,
He took me by the hand, and said to me,
If e'er *he should grow rich, he would return,*
To live in peace upon his father's land,
And *lay his bones among us.*"

The following verses also, descriptive of Leonard's character, appear to have been suggested by his brother's poetical temperament.

"He had been reared
Among the mountains, and he in his heart
Was half a shepherd on the stormy seas.
Oft in the piping shrouds had Leonard heard
The tones of waterfalls, and inland sounds
Of caves and trees:—and, when the regular wind
Between the tropics filled the steady sail,
And blew with the same breath through days and weeks,
Lengthening invisibly its weary line
Along the cloudless Main, he, in those hours
Of tiresome indolence, would often hang
Over the vessel's side, and gaze and gaze;
And, while the broad blue wave and sparkling foam
Flashed round him images and hues that wrought
In union with the employment of his heart,
He, thus by feverish passion overcome,
Even with the organs of his bodily eye,
Below him, in the bosom of the deep,
Saw mountains; saw the forms of sheep that grazed
On verdant hills—with dwellings among trees,
And shepherds clad in the same country grey
Which he himself had worn.

"And now, at last,
From perils manifold, with some small wealth
Acquired by traffic 'mid the Indian Isles,
To his paternal home he is returned,
With a determined purpose to resume
The life he had lived there; both for the sake

for directions what books to buy to carry with him on a voyage of sixteen months.[1] He had taken Anderson's Poets on the last voyage, and gave them now to his brother. And on this voyage he sailed in the spring of 1803, and from this also he returned. The brothers met in London; but the intervals were so brief between the voyages that he was unable to visit Grasmere. At the close of 1804 he was appointed to the command of the Abergavenny East-Indiaman, 1500 tons burden, bound for India and China.

He set sail from Portsmouth at the beginning of February, with the fairest prospect of a prosperous and profitable voyage. The vessel carried 70,000*l.* in specie, and the cargo was estimated at 200,000*l.* There were 402 persons on board. Every thing seemed to promise a realisation of his hopes, which (as will appear hereafter) he entertained for his brother's

---

Of many darling pleasures, and the love
Which to *an only brother he has borne*
In all his hardships, since that happy time
When, whether it blew foul or fair, they two
Were brother-shepherds on their native hills."

[1] "Tell John," says Wordsworth, "when he buys Spenser, to purchase an edition which has his 'State of Ireland' in it. This is in prose. This edition may be scarce, but one surely can be found.

"Milton's Sonnets (transcribe all this for John, as said by me to him), I think manly and dignified compositions, distinguished by simplicity and unity of object and aim, and undisfigured by false or vicious ornaments. They are in several places incorrect, and sometimes uncouth in language, and, perhaps, in some, inharmonious; yet, upon the whole, I think the music exceedingly well suited to its end, that is, it has an energetic and varied flow of sound crowding into narrow room more of the combined effect of rhyme and blank verse than can be done by any other kind of verse I know of. The Sonnets of Milton which I like best are that to *Cyriack Skinner;* on his *Blindness; Captain or Colonel; Massacre of Piedmont; Cromwell,* except two last lines; *Fairfax,*" &c.

sake more than for himself. But all these hopes were suddenly blasted. On Tuesday, February 5th, the ship struck on the shambles of the Bill of Portland, the south side of the isle, near which the Halswell East-Indiaman had been wrecked in 1786. The catastrophe was owing to the incompetency of the pilot who had been taken on board, and professed to know the coast, but had not sufficient knowledge of it. The sad story is told by his brother William, in his letters to his friend, Sir George Beaumont, which exhibit, in the most touching manner, his tender affection for his brother, and give a vivid picture of his character, and of the loss sustained by his death.

To Sir George Beaumont, Bart.

"*Grasmere, Feb.* 11. 1805.

"My dear Friend,

"The public papers will already have broken the shock which the sight of this letter will give you: you will have learned by them the loss of the Earl of Abergavenny East-Indiaman, and, along with her, of a great proportion of the crew, — that of her captain, our brother, and a most beloved brother he was. This calamitous news we received at 2 o'clock to-day, and I write to you from a house of mourning. My poor sister, and my wife who loved him almost as we did (for he was one of the most amiable of men), are in miserable affliction, which I do all in my power to alleviate; but Heaven knows I want consolation myself. I can say nothing higher of my ever-dear brother, than that he was worthy of his sister, who is now weeping beside me, and of the friendship of Coleridge; meek, affectionate, silently enthusiastic, loving all quiet things, and a poet in every thing but words.

"Alas! what is human life! This present moment, I thought, this morning, would have been devoted to the pleasing employment of writing a letter to amuse you in your confinement. I had singled out several little fragments (descriptions merely), which I purposed to have transcribed from my poems, thinking that the perusal of them might give you a few minutes' gratification; and now I am called to this melancholy office.

"I shall never forget your goodness in writing so long and interesting a letter to me under such circumstances. This letter also arrived by the same post which brought the unhappy tidings of my brother's death, so that they were both put into my hands at the same moment. . . .

"Your affectionate friend,
"W. WORDSWORTH.

"I shall do all in my power to sustain my sister under her sorrow, which is, and long will be, bitter and poignant. We did not love him as a brother merely, but as a man of original mind, and an honour to all about him. Oh! dear friend, forgive me for talking thus. We have had no tidings of Coleridge. I tremble for the moment when he is to hear of my brother's death; it will distress him to the heart,—and his poor body cannot bear sorrow. He loved my brother, and he knows how we at Grasmere loved him."

Nine days afterwards, he resumed the subject as follows:

"*Grasmere, Feb.* 20. 1805.

"Having spoken of worldly affairs, let me again mention my beloved brother. It is now just five years since, after a separation of fourteen years (I may call it a separation, for we only saw him four or five times, and by glimpses), he came to visit his sister and me in this cottage, and passed eight blessed months with us. He was then waiting for the command of the ship to which he was appointed when he quitted us. As you will have seen, we had little to live upon, and he as little (Lord Lonsdale being then alive). But he encouraged me to persist, and to keep my eye steady on its object. He would work for me (that was his language), for me and his sister; and I was to endeavour to do something for the world. He went to sea, as commander, with this hope; his voyage was very unsuccessful, he having lost by it considerably. When he came home, we chanced to be in London, and saw him. 'Oh!' said he, 'I have thought of you, and nothing but you; if ever of myself, and my bad success, it was only on your account.' He went again to sea a second time, and also was unsuccessful; still with the same hopes on our account, though then not so necessary, Lord Lowther having paid the money.[1] Lastly came the lamentable voyage, which he entered upon, full of expectation, and love to his sister and myself, and my wife, whom, indeed, he loved with all a brother's tenderness. This is the end of his part of the agreement—of his efforts for my welfare! God grant me life and strength to fulfil mine! I shall never forget him, — never lose sight of him: there is a bond between us yet, the same as if he were living, nay, far more sacred, calling upon me to do my utmost, as he to the last did his utmost to live in honour and worthiness. Some of the newspapers carelessly asserted that he did not wish to survive his ship. This is false. He was heard by one of the surviving officers giving orders, with all possible calmness, a very little before the ship went down; and when he could remain at his post no longer, then, and not till then, he attempted to save himself. I knew this would be so, but it was satisfactory for me to have it confirmed by external evidence. Do not think our grief unreasonable. Of all human beings whom I ever knew, he was the man of the most rational desires, the most sedate habits, and the most perfect self-command. He was modest and gentle, and shy even to disease; but this was wearing off. In every thing his judgments were sound and original; his taste in all the arts, music and poetry in particular (for these he, of course, had had the best opportunities of being familiar with), was exquisite; and his eye for the beauties of nature was as fine and delicate as ever poet or painter was gifted with, in some discriminations, owing to his education and way of life, far superior to any person's I ever knew. But, alas! what avails it? It was the will of God that he should be taken away.

---

[1] Due to Mr. Wordsworth's father from James, Earl of Lonsdale, at whose death, in 1802, it was paid by his Lordship's successor, and divided among the five children.

. . . . . .

I trust in God that I shall not want fortitude; but my loss is great and irreparable.

. . . . . .

"Many thanks for the offer of your house; but I am not likely to be called to town. Lady Beaumont gives us hope we may see you next summer: this would, indeed, be great joy to us all. My sister thanks Lady B. for her affectionate remembrance of her and her letter, and will write as soon as ever she feels herself able. Her health, as was to be expected, has suffered much.

"Your most affectionate friend,
"W. WORDSWORTH."

Again Mr. Wordsworth writes:

"*Grasmere, March* 12. 1805.

"As I have said, your last letter affected me much. A thousand times have I asked myself, as your tender sympathy led me to do, "why was he taken away?" and I have answered the question as you have done. In fact, there is no other answer which can satisfy and lay the mind at rest. Why have we a choice, and a will, and a notion of justice and injustice, enabling us to be moral agents? Why have we sympathies that make the best of us so afraid of inflicting pain and sorrow, which yet we see dealt about so lavishly by the supreme Governor? Why should our notions of right towards each other, and to all sentient beings within our influence, differ so widely from what appears to be His notion and rule, *if every thing were to end here?* Would it not be blasphemy to say that, upon the supposition of the thinking principle being *destroyed by death*, however inferior we may be to the great Cause and Ruler of things, we have *more of love* in our nature than He has? The thought is monstrous; and yet how to get rid of it, except upon the supposition of *another* and a *better world*, I do not see. As to my departed brother, who leads our minds at present to these reflections, he walked all his life pure among many impure. Except a little hastiness of temper, when any thing was done in a clumsy or bungling manner, or when improperly contradicted upon occasions of not much importance, he had not one vice of his profession. I never heard an oath, or even an indelicate expression or allusion, from him in my life; his modesty was equal to that of the purest woman. In prudence, in meekness, in self-denial, in fortitude, in just desires and elegant and refined enjoyments, with an entire simplicity of manners, life, and habit, he was all that could be wished for in man; strong in health, and of a noble person, with every hope about him that could render life dear, thinking of, and living only for, others,—and we see what has been his end! So good must be better; so high must be destined to be higher.

. . . . . .

"I will take this opportunity of saying, that the newspaper accounts of the loss of the ship are throughout grossly inaccurate. The chief facts I will state, in a few words, from the deposition at the India House of one of the surviving officers. She struck at 5 P.M. Guns were fired immediately, and were continued to be fired. She was gotten off the rock at half-past seven, but had taken in so much water, in spite of constant pumping, as to be water-logged. They had, however, hope that she might still be run upon Weymouth Sands, and with this view continued pumping and baling till eleven, when she went down. The long-boat could not be hoisted out, as, had that been done, there would have been no possibility of the ship being run aground. I have mentioned these things, because the newspaper accounts were such as tended to throw discredit on my brother's conduct and personal firmness, stating that the ship had struck an hour and a half before guns were fired, and that, in the agony of the moment, the boats had been forgotten to be hoisted out. We knew well this could not be; but, for the sake of the relatives of the persons lost, it distressed us much that it should have been said. A few minutes before the ship went down, my brother was seen talking with the first mate, with apparent cheerfulness; and he was standing on the hen-coop, which is the point from which he could overlook the whole ship, the moment she went down, dying, as he had lived, in the very place and point where his duty stationed him. I must beg your pardon for detaining you so long on this melancholy subject; and yet it is not altogether melancholy, for what nobler spectacle can be contemplated than that of a virtuous man, with a serene countenance, in such an overwhelming situation? I will here transcribe a passage which I met with the other day in a review; it is from Aristotle's 'Synopsis of the Virtues and Vices.'[1] 'It is,' says he, 'the property of fortitude not to be easily terrified by the dread of things pertaining to death; to possess good confidence in things terrible, and presence of mind in dangers; rather to prefer to be put to death worthily, than to be preserved basely; and to be the cause of victory. Moreover, it is the property of fortitude to labour and endure, and to make valorous exertion an object of choice. Further, presence of mind, a well-disposed soul, confidence and boldness are the attendants on fortitude; and, besides these, industry and patience.' Except in the circumstance of making valorous exertion an 'object *of choice*' (if the philosopher alludes to general habits of character), my brother might have sat for this picture; but he was of a meek and retired nature, loving all quiet things.

---

[1] Vol. ix. p. 395. ed. Bekker. Oxon. 1837.

"I remain, dear Sir George,
"Your most affectionate friend,
"W. WORDSWORTH."

The following, to his friend Southey, was written the morrow after the arrival of the sad tidings:

"*Tuesday Evening, Grasmere,* 1805.

"We see nothing here that does not remind us of our dear brother; there is nothing about us (save the children, whom he had not seen) that he has not known and loved.

"If you could bear to come to this house of mourning to-morrow, I should be for ever thankful. We weep much to-day, and that relieves us. As to fortitude, I hope I shall show that, and that all of us will show it in a proper time, in keeping down many a silent pang hereafter. But grief will, as you say, and must, have its course; there is no wisdom in attempting to check it under the circumstances which we are all of us in here.

"I condole with you, from my soul, on the melancholy account of your own brother's situation; God grant you may not hear such tidings! Oh! it makes the heart groan, that, with such a beautiful world as this to live in, and such a soul as that of man's is by nature and gift of God, that we should go about on such errands as we do, destroying and laying waste; and ninety-nine of us in a hundred never easy in any road that travels towards peace and quietness. And yet, what virtue and what goodness, what heroism and courage, what triumphs of disinterested love everywhere, and human life, after all, what it is! Surely, this is not to be for ever, even on this perishable planet! Come to us to-morrow, if you can; your conversation, I know, will do me good.

. . . . . .

"All send best remembrances to you all.

"Your affectionate friend,
"W. WORDSWORTH."

The following, to another friend, may complete the sad tale:

"*Grasmere, March* 16. 1805.

"He wrote to us from Portsmouth, about twelve days before this disaster, full of hopes, saying that he was to sail to-morrow. Of course, at the time when we heard this deplorable news, we imagined that he was as far on his voyage as Madeira. It was, indeed, a thunderstroke to us! The language which he held was always so encouraging, saying that ships were, in nine instances out of ten, lost by mismanagement: he had, indeed, a great fear of pilots, and I have often heard him say, that no situation could be imagined more distressing than that of being at the mercy of these men. 'Oh!' said he, 'it is a joyful hour for us when we get rid of them.' His fears, alas! were too well founded; his own ship was lost while under the management of the pilot, whether mismanaged by him or not, I do not know; but know for certain, which is, indeed, our great consolation, that our dear brother did all that man could do, even to the sacrifice of his own life. The newspaper accounts were grossly inaccurate; indeed, that must have been obvious to any person who could bear to think upon the subject, for they were absolutely unintelligible. There are two pamphlets upon the subject; one a mere transcript from the papers; the other may be considered, as to all important particulars, as of authority; it is by a person high in the India House, and contains the deposition of the surviving officers concerning the loss of the ship. The pamphlet, I am told, is most unfeelingly written: I have only seen an extract from it, containing Gilpin's deposition, the fourth mate. From this, it appears that every thing was done that could be done, under the circumstances, for the safety of the lives and the ship. My poor brother was standing on the hen-coop (which is placed upon the poop, and is the most commanding situation in the vessel) when she went down, and he was thence washed overboard by a large sea, which sank the ship. He was seen struggling with the waves some time afterwards, having laid hold, it is said, of a rope. He was an excellent swimmer; but what could it avail in such a sea, encumbered with his clothes, and exhausted in body, as he must have been!

"For myself, I feel that there is something cut out of my life which cannot be restored. I never thought of him but with hope and delight: we looked forward to the time, not distant, as we thought, when he would settle near us, when the task of his life would be over, and he would have nothing to do but reap his reward. By that time, I hoped also that the chief part of my labours would be executed, and that I should be able to show him that he had not placed a false confidence in me. I never wrote a line without a thought of its giving him pleasure: my writings, printed and manuscript, were his delight, and one of the chief solaces of his long voyages. But let me stop: I will not be cast down; were it only for his sake, I will not be dejected. I have much yet to do, and pray God to give me strength and power: his part of the agreement between us is brought to an end, mine continues; and I hope when I shall be able to think of him with a calmer mind, that the remembrance of him dead will even animate me more than the joy which I had in him living. I wish you would procure the pamphlet I have mentioned; you may know the right one, by its having a motto from Shakspeare, from Clarence's dream. I wish you to see it, that you may read G.'s statement, and be enabled, if the affair should ever be mentioned in your hearing, to correct the errors which they must have fallen into who have taken their ideas from the newspaper accounts. I have dwelt long, too long I fear, upon this subject, but I could not write to you upon any thing else, till I had unburthened my heart. We have great consolations from the sources you allude to; but, alas! we have much yet to endure. Time only can give us regular tranquillity. We neither murmur nor repine, but sorrow we must; we should be senseless else."

Such an event as that which has now been described, and which so powerfully moved the Poet's heart, could not but stir the strings of his lyre. He gave vent to his sorrow in three poems.

The first is entitled " Elegiac Stanzas, suggested by a picture of Peele Castle in a storm; painted by Sir George Beaumont: "[1]

[1] Vol. v. p. 126.

"I was thy neighbour once, thou rugged pile!"

He had spent four weeks there of a college summer vacation, at the house of his cousin, Mrs. Barker. He had then seen the sea in a constant unruffled calm; and of the castle he says,

"Thy form was sleeping on a glassy sea."

But *now*, since his brother's death in the storm, the sea wears to him a new aspect: the sight of the castle in the *storm*, and of a vessel near it tossed by wind and wave, is congenial to his present feelings.

"Well chosen is the spirit that is here,
That hulk which labours in the deadly swell,
This rueful sky, this pageantry of fear!"

The next poem is of a different cast, "To the Daisy."[1]

"Sweet flower! belike one day to have
A place upon thy Poet's grave,
I welcome thee once more."

The flower suggests the remembrance of his brother's love of "all quiet things." His brother's hopes — the ship — the probable results of the voyage in restoring him to his beloved vale and friends, are described. Next follows the shock of the vessel striking on the reef, its struggle with the storm in the dark night, its foundering in the deep, then the death of the captain.

"Six weeks beneath the moving sea,
He lay in slumber quietly:"

---

[1] Vol. ii. p. 129.

then his body was found at the ship's side, and carried to a country churchyard, that of Wythe, a village near Weymouth, and there buried in peace.

> "And thou, sweet flower, shalt sleep and wake
> Upon his senseless grave."

The third poem is entitled "Elegiac Verses," and refers to the scene of the farewell of the Poet and his brother mentioned above (p. 282.), on the mountain track from Grasmere to Paterdale, through Grisedale; and describes the appearance of a beautiful cluster of purple flowers, unseen and unknown before — the Moss Campion, which presented itself to the Poet's eye when he revisited the parting place, and cheered him with its bright colours.

> "This plant
> Is in its beauty ministrant
> To comfort and to peace."[1]

These references may be closed by an allusion to the poem, "The Character of the Happy Warrior,"[2] written in 1806.

Some of the features of that noble picture were drawn from the Poet's brother, Captain Wordsworth. To borrow the author's words, speaking of this poem[3]:

"*Who is the Happy Warrior.*"—"The course of the great war with the French naturally fixed one's attention upon the military character; and, to the honour of our country, there were many illustrious instances of the qualities that constitute its highest excellence. Lord Nelson owned most of the virtues that the trials he was exposed to in his department of the service necessarily call forth and sustain, if they do not produce the contrary vices. But his public life was stained with one great crime, so that, though many passages of these lines were suggested by what was generally known as excellent in his conduct, I have not been able to connect his name with the poem as I could wish, or even to think of him with satisfaction in reference to the idea of what a warrior should be.

---

[1] Vol. v. p. 131—133.

[2] Vol. iv. p. 212.

[3] MS. I. F.

" Let me add, that many elements of the character here portrayed were found in my brother John, who perished by shipwreck, as mentioned elsewhere. His messmates used to call him *the Philosopher*, from which it may be inferred that the qualities and dispositions I allude to had not escaped their notice. He greatly valued moral and religious instruction for youth, as tending to make good sailors. The best, he used to say, came from Scotland; the next to them from the north of England, especially from Westmoreland and Cumberland, where, thanks to the piety and local attachments of our ancestors, endowed, or, as they are called, free-schools abound."

Such was CAPTAIN WORDSWORTH, taken away suddenly in the prime of life, a person whose name deserves to occupy a prominent place in his brother's history, and whose character and conduct may suggest many interesting and profitable reflections, especially to those who have chosen the naval profession as their career in life.

CHAPTER XXIII.

CONTINUATION OF "THE PRELUDE, OR GROWTH OF A POET'S MIND."[1]

In the month of June, 1805, four months after his brother's death, Wordsworth brought to a close the long and elaborate poem on which he had been engaged at intervals for more than six years.[2] This

---

[1] See above, Chapter XV.

[2] Coleridge, to whom "The Prelude" is addressed, is related to have expressed himself in the following terms on this subject. (Table Talk. London, 1835. Vol. ii. p. 70.) "I cannot help regretting that Wordsworth did not first publish his thirteen (fourteen) books on the growth of an individual mind—superior, as I used to think, upon the whole, to 'The Excursion.' You may judge how I felt about them by my own Poem upon the occasion.* Then the plan laid out, and, I believe, partly suggested by me, was, that Wordsworth should assume the station of a man in mental repose, one whose principles were made up, and so prepared to deliver upon authority a system of philosophy. He was to treat man as man,—a subject of eye, ear, touch, and taste, in contact with external nature, and informing the senses from the mind, and not compounding a mind out of the senses; then he was to describe the pastoral and other states of society, assuming something of the Juvenalian spirit as he approached the high civilization of cities and towns, and opening a melancholy picture of the present state of degeneracy and vice; thence he was to infer and reveal the proof of, and necessity for, the whole state of man and society being subject to, and illustrative of, a redemptive process in operation, showing how this idea reconciled all the anomalies, and promised future glory and restoration. Something of this sort was, I think, agreed on. It is, in substance, what I have been all my life doing in my system of philosophy.

---

* Poetical Works, vol. i. p. 206.

was "The Prelude, or Growth of his own Mind," in fourteen books. The sorrow he felt at his brother's loss vents itself in the conclusion of the poem.[1] Alluding to that calamity, he says,

> "The last and later portions of this gift
> Have been prepared—not with the buoyant spirits
> That *were* our daily portion, when we first
> Together wantoned in wild Poesy —
> But under pressure of a private grief
> Keen and enduring. . . ."

The earlier parts of this poem (as has been already stated), were poured forth in a joyful effusion, when the Poet issued from the gates of the imperial city of Goslar,

> "Where he long had pined,
> A discontented sojourner; now free,"

in the spring of 1799.[2] At the close of 1803 or beginning of 1804 (the letter bears no date), he says, from Grasmere, to his friend Wrangham, "I am engaged in writing a poem on my own earlier Life. Three books are nearly finished. My other meditated works are a philosophical poem, and a narrative one: these two will employ me several years."

He was engaged on the sixth book of "The Prelude" (which is entitled "Cambridge and the Alps") in April, 1804, for he there says,

---

"I think Wordsworth possessed more of the genius of a great philosophic poet than any man I ever knew, or, as I believe, has existed in England since Milton; but it seems to me that he ought never to have abandoned the contemplative position which is peculiarly — perhaps, I might say exclusively — fitted for him. His proper title is *Spectator ab extra*."

[1] P. 370.

[2] Prelude, p. 3. and p. 175.

"*Four* years and *thirty*, told this very week,
Have I been now a sojourner on earth,
By sorrow not unsmitten; yet for me
Life's morning radiance hath not left the hills;
Her dew is on the flowers."

The work proceeded rapidly in the autumn of 1804. On the 25th Dec. of that year, he thus writes to Sir G. Beaumont:

To Sir George Beaumont, Bart.

"*Grasmere, Dec.* 25. 1804.

"My dear Sir George,

"You will be pleased to hear that I have been advancing with my work: I have written upwards of 2000 verses during the last ten weeks. I do not know if you are exactly acquainted with the plan of my poetical labour: it is twofold; first, a Poem, to be called 'The Recluse;' in which it will be my object to express in verse my most interesting feelings concerning man, nature, and society; and next, a poem (in which I am at present chiefly engaged) on *my earlier life, or the growth of my own mind*, taken up upon a large scale. This latter work I expect to have finished before the month of May; and then I purpose to fall with all my might on the former, which is the chief object upon which my thoughts have been fixed these many years. Of this poem, that of "The Pedlar,"[1] which Coleridge read you, is part, and I may have written of it altogether about 2000 lines. It will consist, I hope, of about ten or twelve thousand."

---

[1] The Excursion. "The Pedlar" was the title once proposed, from the character of the Wanderer, but abandoned.

He was employed on the seventh book in the beginning of 1805.

> "Six changeful years have vanished since I first
> Poured out, saluted by that quickening breeze,
> Which met me issuing from the city's walls,
> A glad preamble to this verse. . ." [1]

The spring of 1805 appears to have been very favourable to his efforts. He thus writes concerning his progress:

To Sir George Beaumont, Bart.

"*Grasmere, May* 1. 1805.

"My dear Sir George,

"I have wished to write to you every day this long time, but I have also had another wish, which has interfered to prevent me; I mean the wish to resume my poetical labours: time was stealing away fast from me, and nothing done, and my mind still seeming unfit to do anything. At first I had a strong impulse to write a poem that should record my brother's virtues, and be worthy of his memory. I began to give vent to my feelings, with this view, but I was overpowered by my subject, and could not proceed. I composed much, but it is all lost except a few lines, as it came from me in such a torrent that I was unable to remember it. I could not hold the pen myself, and the subject was such that I could not employ Mrs. Wordsworth or my sister as my amanuensis. This work must therefore rest awhile till I am something calmer; I shall, however, never be at peace till, as far as in me lies, I have done justice to my departed brother's memory. His heroic death (the particulars of which I have now accurately collected from several of the sorrowers) exacts this from me, and still more his singularly interesting character, and virtuous and innocent life.

---

[1] p. 171.

"Unable to proceed with this work, I turned my thoughts again to the *Poem on my own Life*, and you will be glad to hear that I have added 300 lines to it in the course of last week. Two books more will conclude it. It will be not much less than 9000 lines, — not hundred but thousand lines long,—an alarming length! and a thing unprecedented in literary history that a man should talk so much about himself. It is not self-conceit, as you will know well, that has induced me to do this, but real humility. I began the work because I was *unprepared* to treat *any more arduous subject, and diffident of my own powers.* Here, at least, I hoped that to a certain degree I should be sure of succeeding, as I had nothing to do but describe what I had felt and thought, and therefore could not easily be bewildered. This might have been done in narrower compass by a man of more address; but I have done my best. If, when the work shall be finished, it appears to the judicious to have redundancies, they shall be lopped off, if possible; but this is very difficult to do, when a man has written with thought; and this defect whenever I have suspected it or found it to exist in any writings of mine, I have always found incurable. The fault lies too deep, and is in the first conception. If you see Coleridge before I do, do not speak of this to him, as I should like to have his judgment unpreoccupied by such an apprehension. I wish much to have your further opinion of the young Roscius, above all of his 'Hamlet.'

It is certainly impossible that he should understand the character, that is, the composition of the character. But many of the sentiments which are put into Hamlet's mouth he may be supposed to be capable of feeling, and to a certain degree of entering into the spirit of some of the situations. I never saw 'Hamlet' acted myself, nor do I know what kind of a play they make of it. I think I have heard that some parts which I consider among the finest are omitted; in particular, Hamlet's wild language after the ghost has disappeared. The players have taken intolerable liberties with Shakspeare's Plays, especially with 'Richard the Third,' which, though a character admirably conceived and drawn, is in some scenes bad enough in Shakspeare himself; but the play, as it is now acted, has always appeared to me a disgrace to the English stage. 'Hamlet,' I suppose, is treated by them with more reverence. They are both characters far, far above the abilities of any actor whom I have ever seen. Henderson was before my time, and, of course, Garrick.

"We are looking anxiously for Coleridge: perhaps he may be with you now. We were afraid that he might have had to hear other bad news of our family, as Lady Beaumont's little god-daughter has lately had that dangerous complaint, the croup, particularly dangerous here, where we are thirteen miles from any medical advice on which we can have the least reliance. Her case has been a mild one, but sufficient to alarm us much, and Mrs. Wordsworth and her aunt have undergone much fatigue in sitting up, as for nearly a fortnight she had very bad nights. She yet requires much care and attention.

"Is your building going on? I was mortified that the sweet little valley, of which you spoke some time ago, was no longer in the possession of your family: it is the place, I believe, where that illustrious and most extraordinary man, Beaumont the Poet, and his brother, were born. One is astonished when one thinks of that man having been only eight-and-twenty years of age, for I believe he was no more, when he died. Shakspeare, we are told, had scarcely written a single play at that age. I hope, for the sake of poets, you are proud of these men.

"Lady Beaumont mentioned some time ago that you were painting a picture from *The Thorn:* is it finished? I should like to see it; the poem is a favourite with me, and I shall love it the better for the honour you have done it. We shall be most happy to have the other drawing which you promised us some time ago. The dimensions of the Applethwaite one are eight inches high, and a very little above ten broad; this, of course, exclusive of the margin.

"I am anxious to know how your health goes on: we are better than we had reason to expect. When we look back upon this spring, it seems like a dreary dream to us. But I trust in God that we shall yet 'bear up and steer right onward.'

"Farewell. I am, your affectionate friend,

"W. WORDSWORTH."

The next letter, written after a month's interval, announces the conclusion of "The Prelude."

To Sir George Beaumont, Bart.

"*Grasmere, June* 3. 1805.

"My dear Sir George,

"I write to you from the moss-hut at the top of my orchard, the sun just sinking behind the hills in front of the entrance, and his light falling upon the green moss of the side opposite me. A linnet is singing in the tree above, and the children of some of our neighbours, who have been to-day little John's visitors, are playing below equally noisy and happy. The green fields in the level area of the vale, and part of the lake, lie before me in quietness. I have just been reading two newspapers, full of factious brawls about Lord Melville and his delinquencies, ravage of the French in the West Indies, victories of the English in the East, fleets of ours roaming the sea in search of enemies whom they cannot find, &c. &c.; and I have asked myself more than once lately, if my affections can be in the right place, caring as I do so little about what the world seems to care so much for. All this seems to me, 'a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.' It is pleasant in such a mood to turn one's thoughts to a good man and a dear friend. I have, therefore, taken up the pen to write to you. And, first, let me thank you (which I ought to have done long ago, and should have done, but that I knew I had a licence from you to procrastinate) for your most acceptable present of Coleridge's portrait, welcome in itself, and more so as coming from you. It is as good a resemblance as I expect to see of Coleridge, taking it all together, for

I consider C.'s as a face absolutely impracticable. Mrs. Wordsworth was overjoyed at the sight of the print, Dorothy and I much pleased. We think it excellent about the eyes and forehead, which are the finest parts of C.'s face, and the general contour of the face is well given; but, to my sister and me, it seems to fail sadly about the middle of the face, particularly at the bottom of the nose. Mrs. W. feels this also; and my sister so much, that, except when she covers the whole of the middle of the face, it seems to her so entirely to alter the expression, as rather to confound than revive in her mind the remembrance of the original. We think, as far as mere likeness goes, Hazlitt's is better; but the expression in Hazlitt's is quite dolorous and funereal; that in this is much more pleasing, though certainly falling far below what one would wish to see infused into a picture of C.

"I have the pleasure to say, that I *finished my poem* about a fortnight ago. I had looked forward to the day as a most happy one; and I was indeed grateful to God for giving me life to complete the work, such as it is. But it was not a happy day for me; I was dejected on many accounts: when I looked back upon the performance, it seemed to have a dead weight about it, — the reality so far short of the expectation. It was the first long labour that I had finished; and the doubt whether I should ever live to write *The Recluse*, and the sense which I had of this poem being so far below what I seemed capable of executing, depressed me much; above all, many heavy thoughts of my poor departed brother hung upon me, the joy which I should have had in showing him the manuscript, and a thousand other vain fancies and dreams. I have spoken of this, because it was a state of feeling new to me, the occasion being new. This work may be considered as a sort of *portico* to 'The Recluse,' part of the same building, which I hope to be able, ere long, to begin with in earnest; and if I am permitted to bring it to a conclusion, and to write, further, a narrative poem of the epic kind, I shall consider the task of my life as over. I ought to add, that I have the satisfaction of finding the present poem not quite of so alarming a length as I apprehended.

"I wish much to hear from you, if you have leisure; but as you are so indulgent to me, it would be the highest injustice were I otherwise to you.

"We have read 'Madoc,' and been highly pleased with it. It abounds in beautiful pictures and descriptions, happily introduced, and there is an animation diffused through the whole story, though it cannot, perhaps, be said that any of the characters interest you much, except, perhaps, young Llewellyn, whose situation is highly interesting, and he appears to me the best conceived and sustained character in the piece. His speech to his uncle at their meeting in the island is particularly interesting. The poem fails in the highest gifts of the poet's mind, imagination in the true sense of the word, and knowledge of human nature and the human heart. There is nothing that shows the hand of the great master; but the beauties in description are innumerable; for instance, that of the figure of the bard, towards the beginning of the convention of the bards, receiving the poetic inspiration; that of the wife of Tlalala, the savage, going out to meet her husband; that of Madoc, and the Atzecan king with a long name, preparing for battle; everywhere, indeed, you have beautiful descriptions, and it is a work which does the author high credit, I think. I should like to know your opinion of it. Farewell! Best remembrances and love to Lady Beaumont. Believe me,

"My dear Sir George,
"Your most sincere friend,
"W. WORDSWORTH."

The poem, thus completed, reposed quietly for many years. It had served its purpose as an experiment, from which the author might ascertain how far he was qualified, "by nature and education, to construct a literary work that might live."[1] Henceforth he resolved to devote his energies to "THE RECLUSE." To use his own illustrations, the "portico" was built, he would now erect the house; or, to adopt his other metaphor, "the ante-chapel" was constructed, he would now proceed to the choir.

He executed the first book[2] of the first part of "The Recluse," which takes up the thread of the personal narrative, where it leaves off in "The Prelude," and begins with describing the commencement of his "Residence at Grasmere;" after which introduction, it propounds the subject in the lines which are printed, as a prospectus, in the preface to "The Excursion:"

"On man, on nature, and on human life,
Musing in solitude, I oft perceive
Fair trains of imagery before me rise."

However, circumstances arose to draw his mind from proceeding in a direct course with the *first* part of "The Recluse," and to transfer his attention to the intermediate or dramatic part, which has been given to the world as "THE EXCURSION."

---

[1] See preface to "Excursion," and advertisement to "The Prelude."

[2] Still remaining in MS.

"The Prelude" having discharged its duty in its experimental character, remained in manuscript during the residue of the author's life, forty-five years. It was occasionally revised by him, and received his final corrections in the year 1832, and was left by him for publication at his decease.

Accordingly it was given to the world in the summer of 1850.

Its title, "The Prelude," had not been fixed on by the author himself: the Poem remained anonymous till his death. The present title has been prefixed to it at the suggestion of the beloved partner of his life, and the best interpreter of his thoughts, from considerations of its tentative and preliminary character. Obviously it would have been desirable to mark its relation to "The Recluse" by some analogous appellation; but this could not easily be done, at the same time that its other essential characteristics were indicated. Besides, the appearance of this poem, *after* the author's death, might tend to lead some readers into an opinion that it was his *final* production, instead of being, as it really is, one of his *earlier* works. They were to be guarded against this supposition. Hence a name has been adopted, which may serve to keep the true nature and position of the poem constantly before the eye of the reader; and "THE PRELUDE" will now be perused and estimated with the feelings properly due to its preparatory character, and to the period at which it was composed.

CHAPTER XXIV.

OTHER POEMS WRITTEN IN 1805 AND 1806.

THE year 1805 was one of the most productive in Wordsworth's poetical life. In addition to the latter books of "The Prelude," which were then written, he composed "The Waggoner" at about the same period.[1] The scene of this poem was laid in his own vale and neighbourhood; and none of his tales appear to have been written with greater facility. This poem also was reserved in manuscript for many years: it was not published till 1819, twelve years after its composition, when it was inscribed to the author's friend, to whose memory he afterwards paid so feeling a tribute[2], CHARLES LAMB.

In the same year also was produced the *Ode to Duty*[3], "on the model," as the author says, of Gray's Ode to Adversity, which is copied from Horace's Ode to Fortune."[4]

In 1805 was likewise written, *An Incident Characteristic of a favourite Dog.*[5] The incident occurred at Sockburn-on-Tees many years before. "This dog," says the author, "I knew well. It belonged to Mrs. Wordsworth's brother, Mr. Thomas Hutchinson, who then lived at Sockburn-on-the-Tees, a beautiful retired situation, where I used to visit him and his sisters before my marriage. My sister and I spent many months there after my return from Germany in 1799."

---

[1] Vol. ii. p. 68.
[2] Vol. v. p. 141.
[3] Vol. iv. p. 210.
[4] MSS. I. F.
[5] Vol. iv. p. 205.

The *Tribute to the Memory of the same Dog*[1] was written at the same time, 1805. The dog *Music* died, aged and blind, by falling into a draw-well at Gallow Hill, to the great grief of the family of the Hutchinsons, who, as has been before mentioned, had removed to that place from Sockburn.

Fidelity, a tribute to the memory of another dog[2], was composed in the same year. On these very affecting lines the following record was given by the writer. "The young man whose death gave occasion to this poem was named Charles Gough, and had come early in the spring to Paterdale for the sake of angling. While attempting to cross over Helvellyn to Grasmere he slipped from a steep part of the rock where the ice was not thawed, and perished. His body was discovered as described in this poem.[3] Sir Walter Scott heard of the accident, and he and I, without either of us knowing that the other had taken up the subject, each wrote a poem in admiration of the dog's fidelity.[4] His contains a most beautiful stanza. . . . .

"I will add that the sentiment in the last four lines of the last stanza of my verses was uttered by a shepherd with such exactness, that a traveller, who afterwards reported his account in print, was induced to question the man whether he had read them, which he had not."[1]

---

[1] Vol. iv. p. 206. [2] Vol. iv. p. 207.

[3] He lies buried in Paterdale churchyard.

[4] Sir W. Scott's poem is entitled "Helvellyn," and will be found among his Ballads, p. 180. edit. 1806.

The stanza referred to by Mr. Wordsworth is that beginning,

"How long didst thou think that his silence was slumber?
When the wind waved his garment, how oft didst thou start?"

On occasion of this mention of Sir Walter Scott's name, it may be recorded, that he, Sir Humphry Davy, and Mr. Wordsworth, ascended together the mountain, Helvellyn, on which this catastrophe occurred, in the autumn of this year; and probably the two Poets heard the story of the event at the same time, and at the same place. A memorial of this ascent is found in the "Musings at Aquapendente,"[2] written more than thirty years afterwards.

"Onward thence
And downward by the skirt of Greenside fell,
And by Glenridding-screes, and low Glencoign,
Places forsaken now, though loving still
The Muses, as they loved them in the days
Of the old minstrels and the border bards.

. . . . .

"One there surely was,
'The Wizard of the North,' with anxious hope
Brought to this genial climate, when disease
Preyed upon body and mind — yet not the less
Had his sunk eye kindled at those dear words
That spake of bards and minstrels; and his spirit
Had flown with mine to old Helvellyn's brow,
Where *once together, in his day of strength,*
We stood rejoicing, as if earth were free
From sorrow, like the sky above our heads."

Soon afterwards, Wordsworth addressed to Scott a letter, on the genius of Dryden, whose works Sir Walter was about to edit. This letter was written from the vale of the northern foot of Helvellyn, Paterdale, soon after their excursion.[1]

---

[1] MSS. I. F.

[2] Vol. iii. p. 154.

"*Paterdale, Nov.* 7. 1805.

"My dear Scott,

"I was much pleased to hear of your engagement with Dryden; not that he is, as a poet, any great favourite of mine. I admire his talents and genius highly, but his is not a poetical genius. The only qualities I can find in Dryden that are *essentially* poetical, are a certain ardour and impetuosity of mind, with an excellent ear. It may seem strange that I do not add to this, great command of language; *that* he certainly has, and of such language too, as it is most desirable that a poet should possess, or rather, that he should not be without. But it is not language that is, in the highest sense of the word, poetical, being neither of the imagination nor of the passions; I mean the amiable, the ennobling, or the intense passions. I do not mean to say that there is nothing of this in Dryden, but as little, I think, as is possible, considering how much he has written. You will easily understand my meaning, when I refer to his versification of 'Palamon and Arcite,' as contrasted with the language of Chaucer. Dryden had neither a tender heart nor a lofty sense of moral dignity. Whenever his language is poetically impassioned, it is mostly upon unpleasing subjects, such as the follies, vices, and crimes of classes of men, or of individuals. That his cannot be the language of imagination, must have necessarily followed from this; that there is not a single image from nature in the whole body of his works; and in his translation from Virgil, whenever Virgil can be fairly said to have his *eye* upon his object, Dryden always spoils the passage.

---

[1] From Lockhart's Life of Scott, vol. ii. p. 287.

"But too much of this; I am glad that you are to be his editor. His political and satirical pieces may be greatly benefited by illustration, and even absolutely require it. A correct text is the first object of an editor; then such notes as explain difficult or obscure passages; and lastly, which is much less important, notes pointing out authors to whom the Poet has been indebted, not in the fiddling way of phrase here and phrase there (which is detestable as a general practice), but where he has had essential obligations either as to matter or manner.

"If I can be of any use to you, do not fail to apply to me. One thing I may take the liberty to suggest, which is, when you come to the fables, might it not be advisable to print the whole of the Tales of Boccace in a smaller type in the original language? If this should look too much like swelling a book, I should certainly make such extracts as would show where Dryden has most strikingly improved upon, or fallen below, his original. I think his translations from Boccace are the best, at least the most poetical, of his poems. It is many years since I saw Boccace, but I remember that Sigismunda is not married by him to Guiscard (the names are different in Boccace in both tales, I believe, certainly in Theodore, &c.). I think Dryden has much injured the story by the marriage, and degraded Sigismunda's character by it. He has also, to the best of my remembrance, degraded her still more, by making her love absolute sensuality and appetite; Dryden had no other notion of the passion. With all these defects, and they are very gross ones, it is a noble poem. Guiscard's answer, when first reproached by Tancred, is noble in Boccace, nothing but this: *Amor può molto più che ne voi ne io possiamo.* This, Dryden has spoiled. He says first very well, 'The faults of love by love are justified,' and then come four lines of miserable rant, quite *à la Maximin.* Farewell, and believe me ever,

"Your affectionate friend,

"WILLIAM WORDSWORTH."

The beauties of Paterdale, whence this letter was written, for a time divided Wordsworth's affection with those of Grasmere. An account of a week's tour made by him in November of this year, with his sister, from Grasmere, over Kirkstone, to Paterdale, Ulleswater, and its neighbourhood, will be found in his "Description of the Lakes."[1] It is from Miss Wordsworth's pen.

At the head of Ulleswater, on the east side, stands the magnificent hill called Place Fell. Under it was a small cottage and a little estate which attracted his attention; and, hearing it might be purchased, he made an offer of a certain sum (800*l.*) to the owner of it. But the possessor would not accept less than 1000*l.* This Mr. Wordsworth did not think it prudent to give. It happened, by chance, that the late Earl Lonsdale, who was not then acquainted with Wordsworth, heard at Lowther of the Poet's wish to possess it. Lord Lonsdale employed his neighbour, Mr. Thomas Wilkinson[2], who has been already mentioned in these pages, to negotiate the purchase; and, with a view of completing it, and under the impression that it was to be sold for that sum, his lordship paid 800*l.* to Mr. Wordsworth's account. This unexpected act of kindness, performed in the most gratifying manner, made a deep impression on the Poet's mind. It removed every remnant of painful feeling that might still have lingered there, in connection with a name recently borne by one who had debarred him, his brothers, and sister, from the enjoyment of their patrimony for nineteen years. The name of Lonsdale, rendered more illustrious, as it now was, by the private and public virtues of its noble possessor, became henceforth an object of affectionate respect to the household at Grasmere. Nor was this mark of regard the less appreciated by the Poet, although he thought it his duty to accept the property at Paterdale only on condition of paying 800*l.*[1]; and for the satisfaction of obtaining it at *this* price, he felt very thankful to Lord Lonsdale, whose donation was so far applied as to raise that sum to 1000*l.*, the sum required to complete the purchase, and he was more grateful still for the unsolicited and unlooked-for generosity evinced in the proffered gift.

---

[1] p. 119—132., ed. 1835.

[2] Above, p. 55.

Lord Nelson died October 21. 1805; Mr. Pitt's death took place in the following year, the 23d January; and Mr. Fox followed him on the 13th September.

It has been mentioned already, that *some* features of Nelson's character suggested materials for Wordsworth's poem, the *Happy Warrior*[2], which was written at this time.

The following letter to Sir George Beaumont touches on that subject, and on the decease and character of Mr. Pitt:

---

[1] 400*l.* of which was supplied by Mrs. Wordsworth.

[2] Above, p. 300. See vol. iv. p. 212.

To Sir George Beaumont, Bart.

" *Grasmere, Feb.* 11. 1806.

" My dear Sir George,

" Upon opening this letter, you must have seen that it is accompanied with a copy of verses.[1] I hope they will give you some pleasure, as it will be the best way in which they can repay me for a little vexation, of which they have been the cause. They were written several weeks ago, and I wished to send them to you, but could not muster up resolution, as I felt that they were so unworthy of the subject. Accordingly, I kept them by me from week to week, with a hope (which has proved vain) that, in some happy moment, a new fit of inspiration would help me to mend them; and hence my silence, which, with your usual goodness, I know you will excuse.

" You will find that the verses are allusive to Lord Nelson; and they will show that I must have sympathised with you in admiration of the man, and sorrow for our loss. Yet, considering the matter coolly, there was little to regret. The state of Lord Nelson's health, I suppose, was such, that he could not have lived long; and the first burst of exultation upon landing in his native country, and his reception here, would have been dearly bought, perhaps, by pain and bodily weakness, and distress among his friends, which he could neither remove nor alleviate. Few men have ever died under circumstances so likely to make their deaths of benefit to their country: it is not easy to see what his life could have done comparable to it. The loss of such men as Lord Nelson is, indeed, great and real; but surely not for the reason which makes most people grieve, a supposition that no other such man is in the country. The old ballad has taught us how to feel on these occasions:

---

[1] The Happy Warrior.

> 'I trust I have within my realm,
> Five hundred good as he.'

But this is the evil, that nowhere is merit so much under the power of what (to avoid a more serious expression) one may call that of fortune, as in military and naval service; and it is five hundred to one that such men will not have attained situations where they can show themselves so that the country may know in whom to trust. Lord Nelson had attained that situation; and, therefore, I think (and not for the other reason), ought we chiefly to lament that he is taken from us.

"Mr. Pitt is also gone! by tens of thousands looked upon in like manner as a great loss. For my own part, as probably you know, I have never been able to regard his political life with complacency. I believe him, however, to have been as disinterested a man, and as true a lover of his country, as it was possible for so ambitious a man to be. His *first* wish (though probably unknown to himself) was that his country should prosper *under his administration;* his *next*, that it should *prosper*. Could the *order* of these wishes have been *reversed*, Mr. Pitt would have avoided many of the grievous mistakes into which, I think, he fell. I know, my dear Sir George, you will give me credit for speaking without arrogance; and I am aware it is not unlikely you may differ greatly from me in these points. But I like, in some things, to differ with a friend, and that he should *know* I differ from him; it seems to make a more healthy friendship, to act as a relief to those notions and feelings which we have in common, and to give them a grace and spirit which they could not otherwise possess."

Something of the same spirit as manifests itself in the above remarks on Lord Nelson's death, is displayed in the lines written in the autumn of this year, on the dissolution of Mr. Fox; the same kind of consolation is suggested in both cases:

"Loud is the Vale! the Voice is up
With which she speaks when storms are gone."[1]

In that poem, all true greatness is represented as an emanation from the one everlasting source of good; and although *one efflux* may fail, yet the *fountain* is inexhaustible.

Having had occasion to mention incidentally Mr. Thomas Wilkinson, of Yanwath (which lies a little to the south of Penrith, and half way between it and Lowther), I may here refer more directly to the poem addressed to him, and descriptive of his character and pursuits. It was written in 1804:

"Spade! with which Wilkinson hath tilled his lands,
And shaped these pleasant walks by Emont's side."[2]

In connection with this poem, the following notice, from the mouth of the author, may be inserted here[3]:

To the Spade of a Friend.—"This person was Thomas Wilkinson, a quaker by religious profession; by natural constitution of mind—or, shall I venture to say, by God's grace? he was something better. He had inherited a small estate, and built a house upon it, near Yanwath, upon the banks of the Emont. I have heard him say that his heart used to beat, in his boyhood, when he heard the sound of a drum and fife. Nevertheless, the spirit of enterprise in him confined itself to tilling his ground, and conquering such obstacles as stood in the way of its fertility. Persons of his religious persuasion do now, in a far greater degree than formerly, attach themselves to trade and commerce. He kept the old track. As represented in this poem, he employed his leisure hours in shaping pleasant walks by the side of his beloved river, where he also built something between a hermitage and a summer-house, attaching to it inscriptions, after the manner of Shenstone at his Leasowes. He used to travel from time to time, partly from love of nature, and partly with religious friends, in the service of humanity. His admiration of genius in every department did him much honour. Through his connection with the family in which Edmund Burke was educated, he became acquainted with that great man, who used to receive him with great kindness and condescension; and many times have I heard Wilkinson speak of those interesting interviews. He was honoured also by the friendship of Elizabeth Smith, and of Thomas Clarkson and his excellent wife, and was much esteemed by Lord and Lady Lonsdale, and every member of that family. Among his verses (he wrote many), are some worthy of preservation; one little poem in particular, upon disturbing, by prying curiosity, a bird while hatching her young in his garden. The latter part of this innocent

---

[1] Vol. v. p. 134. [2] Vol. iv. p. 202. [3] MSS. I. F.

and good man's life was melancholy; he became blind; and also poor, by becoming surety for some of his relations. He was a bachelor. He bore, as I have often witnessed, his calamities with unfailing resignation. I will only add, that while working in one of his fields, he unearthed a stone of considerable size, then another, and then two more; and observing that they had been placed in order, as if forming the segment of a circle, he proceeded carefully to uncover the soil, and brought into view a beautiful *Druid's temple*, of perfect, though small dimensions. In order to make his farm more compact, he exchanged this field for another, and, I am sorry to add, the new proprietor destroyed this interesting relic of remote ages for some vulgar purpose. The fact, so far as concerns Thomas Wilkinson, is mentioned in the note on a sonnet on *Long Meg and her Daughters*."[1]

---

[1] Vol. iv. p. 171.

CHAPTER XXV.

"POEMS IN TWO VOLUMES," PUBLISHED IN 1807. UNPOPULARITY.

In the year 1807, appeared two volumes, in 12mo., of poems, by Mr. Wordsworth. These were then published for the first time, and they consist of pieces, for the most part already enumerated, composed in the interval between the year 1800, when the two volumes of "Lyrical Ballads" appeared, and 1807.[1]

---

[1] The contents of these two volumes are as follows:—

Contents of Vol. I.

To the Daisy.
Louisa.
Fidelity.
"She was a Phantom."
The Redbreast and the Butterfly.
The Sailor's Mother.
To the small Celandine.
To the same Flower.
Character of the Happy Warrior.
The Horn of Egremont Castle.
The Affliction of Margaret —— of ——
The Kitten and the falling Leaves.
The Seven Sisters, or the Solitude of Binnorie.
To H. C., six years old.
"Among all lovely things my love had been."
"I travelled among unknown men."
Ode to Duty.

POEMS COMPOSED DURING A TOUR CHIEFLY ON FOOT.

1. Beggars.
2. To a Skylark.
3. "With how sad steps, O moon," &c.
4. Alice Fell.
5. Resolution and Independence.

The motto adopted in the title[1] intimates that the author was meditating other works of a higher strain.

SONNETS.

Prefatory Sonnet.

Part the First.—Miscellaneous Sonnets.

1. "How sweet it is when mother Fancy rocks."
2. "Where lies the land to which yon ship must go?"
3. Composed after a Journey across the Hambleton Hills, Yorkshire.
4. "These words were uttered in a pensive mood."
5. To Sleep. "O gentle Sleep, do they belong to thee?"
6. To Sleep. "A flock of sheep that leisurely pass by."
7. To Sleep. "Fond words have oft been spoken to thee, Sleep."
8. "With ships the sea was sprinkled far and wide."
9. To the River Duddon.
10. From the Italian of Michael Angelo. "Yes hope," &c.
11. From the same. "No mortal object did these eyes behold."
12. From the same. To the Supreme Being.
13. Written in very early Youth.
14. Composed upon Westminster Bridge, Sept. 3. 1803.
15. "Beloved Vale! I said," &c.'
16. "Methought I saw the footsteps of a throne."
17. To ——. "Lady! the songs of spring," &c.
18. "The world is too much with us," &c.
19. "It is a beauteous evening, calm and free."
20. To the Memory of Raisley Calvert.

Part the Second.— Sonnets dedicated to Liberty.

1. Composed by the Sea-side near Calais, Aug. 1802.
2. "Is it a Reed."
3. To a Friend; composed near Calais on the road leading to Ardres, Aug. 7. 1802.
4. "I grieved for Buonaparte," &c.
5. "Festivals have I seen that were not names."

---

[1] The title is "Poems in Two Volumes, by William Wordsworth, author of the Lyrical Ballads," with the motto—

> "Posterius graviore sono tibi Musa loquetur
> Nostra, dabunt cum securos mihi tempora fructus."

Since the year 1798, when the first volume of the “Lyrical Ballads” was published, there appears to

---

6. On the Extinction of the Venetian Republic.
7. The King of Sweden.
8. To Toussaint l'Ouverture.
9. “ We had a fellow-passenger who came.”
10. Composed in the Valley near Dover on the day of landing.
11. “Inland, within a hollow vale I stood.”
12. Thought of a Briton on the subjugation of Switzerland.
13. Written in London, Sept. 1802.
14. “ Milton, thou shouldst be living at this hour.”
15. “ Great men have been among us,” &c.
16. “ It is not to be thought of that the flood.”
17. “ When I have borne in memory what has tamed.”
18. “ One might believe that natural miseries.”
19. “ There is a bondage which is worse to bear.”
20. “ These times touch moneyed worldlings with dismay.”
21. “England! the time is come when thou shouldst wear.”
22. “ When looking on the present face of things.”
23. To the Men of Kent.
24. “ Six thousand veterans practised in War's game.”
25. Anticipation. Oct. 1803.
26. “ Another year! another deadly blow!”

Notes.

CONTENTS OF VOL. II.

POEMS WRITTEN DURING A TOUR IN SCOTLAND.

1. Rob Roy's Grave.
2. The Solitary Reaper.
3. Stepping Westward.
4. Glen-Almain, or the Narrow Glen.
5. The Matron of Jedburgh and her Husband.
6. To a Highland Girl.
7. Sonnet. “ Degenerate Douglas,” &c.
8. Address to the Sons of Burns after visiting their Father's Grave, Aug. 14. 1803.
9. Yarrow unvisited.

MOODS OF MY OWN MIND.

1. To a Butterfly.
2 “ The sun has long been set ”

have been a steady, though not an eager, demand for his poetical works. A fourth edition of that volume

---

3. "O Nightingale! thou surely art."
4. "My heart leaps up when I behold."
5. Written in March while resting on the Bridge at the foot of Brother's Water.
6. The small Celandine.
7. "I wandered lonely as a cloud."
8. "Who fancied what a pretty sight."
9. The Sparrow's Nest.
10. Gipsies.
11. To the Cuckoo.
12. To a Butterfly.

The Blind Highland Boy.
The Green Linnet.
To a Young Lady who had been reproached for taking long walks in the Country.
"By their floating mill," &c.
Stargazers.
Power of Music.
To the Daisy. "With little here to do or see."
To the same Flower. "Bright flower whose home is every where!"
Incident characteristic of a favourite Dog which belonged to a friend of the Author
Tribute to the memory of the same Dog.
Sonnet. "Yes, there is holy pleasure in thine eye!"
Sonnet. "Though narrow be that old man's cares," &c.
Sonnet. "High deeds, O Germans, are to come from you."
Sonnet to Thomas Clarkson.
"Once in a lonely hamlet," &c.
Foresight.
A Complaint.
"I am not one," &c.
"Yes! full surely 'twas the Echo," &c.
To the Spade of a Friend.
Song, at the Feast of Brougham Castle.
Lines composed at Grasmere.
Elegiac Stanzas.
Ode.
Notes.

had been called for. His poetical reputation was, therefore, making some progress. He had few, but ardent, admirers; on the other hand, he had many powerful enemies. The vitality of his fame provoked their hostility. If the "Lyrical Ballads" had silently sunk into oblivion, the acrimony of these critics would not have been excited, or, if excited, would soon have subsided. But they were irritated by the energy of that which they despised. Their own character for critical acumen seemed to be at stake; and they conspired to crush a reputation whose existence was a practical protest against their own literary principles and practice, and which doubtless appeared to them to be fraught with pernicious consequences to the dignity of English literature, and the progress of English intelligence. It would be an invidious task to specify the criticisms of a vituperative kind, by which these poems were assailed. It is more honourable to Mr. Wordsworth that a general amnesty should now be proclaimed in his name. Let, therefore, the memory of all personal animosities be buried in his grave. But the *fact* that he had to *sustain* such obloquy[1], and that he *lived to overcome it*, is far too instructive to be forgotten. It is of inestimable value to critics, writers, and readers. It should serve to smooth the asperity, and temper the confidence, of critics. It ought to chasten the pride of literary men who may be elated by contemporary applause; and, on the other hand, it may serve to cheer the sadness of those meritorious labourers who, although toiling honourably in the cause of truth, are requited only by censure. It ought to guard all, readers as well as writers, against placing too much confidence in contemporary opinions. "*Vivorum censura difficilis*," ἁμέραι δ' ἐπίλοιποι μάρτυρες σοφώτατοι.

---

[1] The effect of these strictures in checking the sale of the Poems was such that no edition of them was required between 1807 and 1815.

For many years, Mr. Wordsworth's name was overhung with clouds, but at length it emerged from them into clear sunshine. He lived and wrote with full confidence that such would eventually be the case; and, since he did not write for earthly fame, he maintained his equanimity in all weathers.

A letter written in the year 1807, to Lady Beaumont, on the publication of his poems, expresses his sentiments at that time, and cannot fail to be read with deep interest:

" *Coleorton, May* 21. 1807.

" My dear Lady Beaumont,

" Though I am to see you so soon, I cannot but write a word or two, to thank you for the interest you take in my poems, as evinced by your solicitude about their immediate reception. I write partly to thank you for this, and to express the pleasure it has given me, and partly to remove any uneasiness from your mind which the disappointments you sometimes meet with, in this labour of love, may occasion. I see that you have many battles to fight for me, — more than, in the ardour and confidence of your pure and elevated mind, you had ever thought of being summoned to; but be assured that this opposition is nothing more than what I distinctly foresaw that you and my other friends would have to encounter. I say this, not to give myself credit for an eye of prophecy, but to allay any vexatious thoughts on my account which this opposition may have produced in you.

" It is impossible that any expectations can be lower than mine concerning the immediate effect of this little work upon what is called the public. I do not here take into consideration the envy and malevolence, and all the bad passions which always stand in the way of a work of any merit from a living poet; but merely think of the pure, absolute, honest ignorance in which all worldlings of every rank and situation must be enveloped, with respect to the thoughts, feelings, and images, on which the life of my poems depends. The things which I have taken, whether from within or without, what have they to do with routs, dinners, morning calls, hurry from door to door, from street to street, on foot or in carriage; with Mr. Pitt or Mr. Fox, Mr. Paul or Sir Francis Burdett, the Westminster election or the borough of Honiton? In a word — for I cannot stop to make my way through the hurry of images that present themselves to me — what have they to do with endless talking about things nobody cares any thing for except as far as their own vanity is concerned, and this with persons they care nothing for but as their vanity or *selfishness* is concerned? — what have they to do (to say all at once) with a life without love? In such a life there can be no thought; for we have no thought (save thoughts of pain) but as far as we have love and admiration.

"It is an awful truth, that there neither is, nor can be, any genuine enjoyment of poetry among nineteen out of twenty of those persons who live, or wish to live, in the broad light of the world — among those who either are, or are striving to make themselves, people of consideration in society. This is a truth, and an awful one, because to be incapable of a feeling of poetry, in my sense of the word, is to be without love of human nature and reverence for God.

"Upon this I shall insist elsewhere; at present let me confine myself to my object, which is to make you, my dear friend, as easy-hearted as myself with respect to these poems. Trouble not yourself upon their present reception; of what moment is that compared with what I trust is their destiny?—to console the afflicted; to add sunshine to daylight, by making the happy happier; to teach the young and the gracious of every age to see, to think, and feel, and, therefore, to become more actively and securely virtuous; this is their office, which I trust they will faithfully perform, long after we (that is, all that is mortal of us) are mouldered in our graves. I am well aware how far it would seem to many I overrate my own exertions, when I speak in this way, in direct connection with the volume I have just made public.

"I am not, however, afraid of such censure, insignificant as probably the majority of those poems would appear to very respectable persons. I do not mean London wits and witlings, for these have too many foul passions about them to be respectable, even if they had more intellect than the benign laws of Providence will allow to such a heartless existence as theirs is; but grave, kindly-natured, worthy persons, who would be pleased if they could. I hope that these volumes are not without some recommendations, even for readers of this class: but their imagination has slept; and the voice which is the voice of my poetry, without imagination, cannot be heard. Leaving these, I was going to say a word to such readers as Mr. ——. Such!—how would he be offended if he knew I considered him only as a representative of a class, and not an unique! 'Pity,' says Mr. —— 'that so many trifling things should be admitted to obstruct the view of those that have merit.' Now, let this candid judge take, by way of example, the sonnets, which, probably, with the exception of two or three other poems, for which I will not contend, appear to him the most trifling, as they are the shortest. I would say to him, omitting things of higher consideration, there is one thing which must strike you at once, if you will only read these poems, — that those 'to Liberty,' at least, have a connection with, or a bearing upon, each other; and, therefore, if individually they want weight, perhaps, as a body, they may not be so deficient. At least, this ought to induce you to suspend your judgment, and qualify it so far as to allow that the writer aims at least at comprehensiveness.

"But, dropping this, I would boldly say at once, that these sonnets, while they each fix the attention upon some important sentiment, separately considered, do, at the same time, collectively make a poem on the subject of civil liberty and national independence, which, either for simplicity of style or grandeur of moral sentiment, is, alas! likely to have few parallels in the poetry of the present day. Again, turn to the 'Moods of my own Mind.' There is scarcely a poem here of above thirty lines, and very trifling these poems will appear to many; but, omitting to speak of them individually, do they not, taken collectively, fix the attention upon a subject eminently poetical, viz., the interest which objects in nature derive from the predominance of certain affections, more or less permanent, more or less capable of salutary renewal in the mind of the being contemplating these objects? This is poetic, and essentially poetic. And why? Because it is creative.

"But I am wasting words, for it is nothing more than you know; and if said to those for whom it is intended, it would not be understood.

"I see by your last letter, that Mrs. Fermor has entered into the spirit of these 'Moods of my own Mind.' Your transcript from her letter gave me the greatest pleasure; but I must say that even she has something yet to receive from me. I say this with confidence, from her thinking that I have fallen below myself in the sonnet, beginning,

> 'With ships the sea was sprinkled far and nigh.'

As to the other which she objects to, I will only observe, that there is a misprint in the last line but two,

> 'And *though* this wilderness,'

for

> 'And *through* this wilderness,'

that makes it unintelligible. This latter sonnet, for many reasons (though I do not abandon it), I will not now speak of; but upon the other, I could say something important in conversation, and will attempt now to illustrate it by a comment, which, I feel, will be inadequate to convey my meaning. There is scarcely one of my poems which does not aim to direct the attention to some moral sentiment, or to some general principle, or law of thought, or of our intellectual constitution. For instance, in the present case, who is there that has not felt that the mind can have no rest among a multitude of objects, of which it either cannot make one whole, or from which it cannot single out one individual whereupon may be concentrated the attention, divided among or distracted by a multitude? After a certain time, we must either select one image or object, which must put out of view the rest wholly, or must subordinate them to itself while it stands forth as a head:

'How glowed the firmament
With living sapphires! Hesperus, that *led*
The starry host, rode brightest; till the moon,
Rising in clouded majesty, at length,
Apparent *Queen*, unveiled *her peerless* light,
And o'er the dark her silver mantle threw.'

Having laid this down as a general principle, take the case before us. I am represented in the sonnet as casting my eyes over the sea, sprinkled with a multitude of ships, like the heavens with stars. My mind may be supposed to float up and down among them, in a kind of dreamy indifference with respect either to this or that one, only in a pleasurable state of feeling with respect to the whole prospect. 'Joyously it showed.' This continued till that feeling may be supposed to have passed away, and a kind of comparative listlessness or apathy to have succeeded, as at this line,

'Some veering up and down, one knew not why.'

All at once, while I am in this state, comes forth an object, an individual; and my mind, sleepy and unfixed, is awakened and fastened in a moment.

'Hesperus, that *led*
The starry host'

is a poetical object, because the glory of his own nature gives him the pre-eminence the moment he appears. He calls forth the poetic faculty, receiving its exertions as a tribute. But this ship in the sonnet may, in a manner still more appropriate, be said to come upon a mission of the poetic spirit, because, in its own appearance and attributes, it is barely sufficiently distinguished to rouse the creative faculty of the human mind, to exertions at all times welcome, but doubly so when they come upon us when in a state of remissness. The mind being once fixed and roused, all the rest comes from itself; it is merely a lordly ship, nothing more:

'This ship was nought to me, nor I to her,
Yet I pursued her with a lover's look.'

My mind wantons with grateful joy in the exercise of its own powers, and, loving its own creation,

'This ship to all the rest I did prefer,'

making her a sovereign or a regent, and thus giving body and life to all the rest; mingling up this idea with fondness and praise —

'where she comes the winds must stir;'

and concluding the whole with,

'On went she, and due north her journey took;'

thus taking up again the reader with whom I began, letting him know how long I must have watched this favourite vessel, and inviting him to rest his mind as mine is resting.

"Having said so much upon mere fourteen lines, which Mrs. Fermor did not approve, I cannot but add a word or two upon my satisfaction in finding that my mind has so much in common with hers, and that we participate so many of each other's pleasures. I collect this from her having singled out the two little poems, 'The Daffodils,' and 'The Rock crowned with Snowdrops.' I am sure that whoever is much pleased with either of these quiet and tender delineations must be fitted to walk through the recesses of my poetry with delight, and will there recognise, at every turn, something or other in which, and over which, it has that property and right which knowledge and love confer. The line,

'Come, blessed barrier,' &c.,

in the 'Sonnet upon Sleep,' which Mrs. F. points out, had before been mentioned to me by Coleridge, and, indeed, by almost every body who had heard it, as eminently beautiful. My letter (as this second sheet, which I am obliged to take, admonishes me) is growing to an enormous length; and yet, saving that I have expressed my calm confidence that these poems will live, I have said nothing which has a particular application to the object of it, which was to remove all disquiet from your mind on account of the condemnation they may at present incur from that portion of my contemporaries who are called the public. I am sure, my dear Lady Beaumont, if you attach any importance to it, it can only be from an apprehension that it may affect me, upon which I have already set you at ease; or from a fear that this present blame is ominous of their future or final destiny. If this be the case, your tenderness for me betrays you. Be assured that the decision of these persons has nothing to do with the question; they are altogether incompetent judges. These people, in the senseless hurry of their idle lives, do not *read* books, they merely snatch a glance at them, that they may talk about them. And even if this were not so, never forget what, I believe, was observed to you by Coleridge, that every great and original writer, in proportion as he is great or original, must himself create the taste by which he is to be relished; he must teach the art by which he is to be seen; this, in a certain degree, even to all persons, however wise and pure may be their lives, and however unvitiated their taste. But for those who dip into books in order to give an opinion of them, or talk about them to take up an opinion — for this multitude of unhappy, and misguided, and misguiding beings, an entire regeneration must be produced; and if this be possible, it must be a work *of time.* To conclude, my ears are stone-dead to this idle buzz, and my flesh as insensible as iron to these petty stings; and, after what I have said, I am sure yours will be the same. I doubt not that you will share with me an invincible confidence that my writings (and among them these little poems) will co-operate with the benign tendencies in human nature and society, wherever found; and that they will, in their degree, be efficacious in making men wiser, better, and happier. Farewell! I will not apologise for this letter, though its length demands an apology. Believe me, eagerly wishing for the happy day when I shall see you and Sir George here,

"Most affectionately yours,
"W. WORDSWORTH.

"Do not hurry your coming hither on our account: my sister regrets that she did not press this upon you, as you say in your letter, 'we cannot *possibly* come before the first week in June;' from which we infer that your kindness will induce you to make sacrifices for our sakes. Whatever pleasure we may have in thinking of Grasmere, we have no impatience to be gone, and think with full as much regret of leaving

Coleorton. I had, for myself, indeed, a wish to be at Grasmere with as much of the summer before me as might be; but to this I attach no importance whatever, as far as the gratification of that wish interferes with any inclination or duty of yours. I could not be satisfied without seeing you here, and shall have great pleasure in waiting."

Another letter may be inserted here:

"My dear Sir George,

"I am quite delighted to hear of your picture for 'Peter Bell;' I was much pleased with the sketch, and I have no doubt that the picture will surpass it as far as a picture ought to do. I long much to see it. I should approve of any engraver approved by you. But remember that no poem of mine will ever be popular; and I am afraid that the sale of 'Peter' would not carry the expence of the engraving, and that the poem, in the estimation of the public, would be a weight upon the print. I say not this in modest disparagement of the poem, but in sorrow for the sickly taste of the public in verse. The *people* would love the poem of 'Peter Bell,' but the *public* (a very different being) will never love it. Thanks for dear Lady B.'s transcript from your friend's letter; it is written with candour, but I must say a word or two not in praise of it. 'Instances of what I mean,' says your friend, 'are to be found in a poem on a Daisy' (by the by, it is on *the* Daisy, a mighty difference!) 'and on *Daffodils reflected in the Water.*' Is this accurately transcribed by Lady Beaumont? If it be, what shall we think of criticism or judgment founded upon, and exemplified by, a poem which must have been so inattentively perused? My language is precise; and, therefore, it would be false modesty to charge myself with blame.

> 'Beneath the trees,
> Ten thousand dancing in the *breeze*.
> The *waves beside* them danced, but they
> Outdid the *sparkling waves* in glee.'

Can expression be more distinct? And let me ask your friend how it is possible for flowers to be *reflected* in water where there are *waves?* They may, indeed, in *still* water; but the very object of my poem is the trouble or agitation, both of the flowers and the water. I must needs respect the understanding of every one honoured by your friendship; but sincerity compels me to say that my poems must be more nearly looked at, before they can give rise to any remarks of much value, even from the strongest minds. With respect to this individual poem, Lady B. will recollect how Mrs. Fermor expressed herself upon it. A letter also was sent to me, addressed to a friend of mine, and by him communicated to me, in which this identical poem was singled out for fervent approbation. What then shall we say? Why, let the poet first consult his own heart, as I have done, and leave the rest to posterity, — to, I hope an improving posterity. The fact is, the English *public* are at this moment in the same state of mind with respect to my poems, if small things may be compared with great, as the French are in respect to Shakspeare, and not the French alone, but almost the whole Continent. In short, in your friend's letter, I am condemned for the very thing for which I ought to have been praised, viz., that I have not written down to the level of superficial observers and unthinking minds. Every great poet is a teacher: I wish either to be considered as a teacher, or as nothing.

"To turn to a more pleasing subject. Have you painted anything else beside this picture from 'Peter Bell?' Your two oil-paintings (and, indeed, everything I have of yours) have been much admired by the artists who have seen them. And, for our own parts, we like them better every day; this, in particular, is the case with the small picture from the neighbourhood of Coleorton, which, indeed, pleased me much at the first sight, but less impressed the rest of our household, who now see as many beauties in it as I do myself. Havill, the water-colour painter, was much pleased with these things; he is painting at Ambleside, and has done a view of Rydal Water, looking down upon it from Rydal Park, of which I should like to know your opinion; it will be exhibited in the spring, in the water-colour Exhibition. I have purchased a black-lead pencil sketch of Mr. Green, of Ambleside, which, I think, has great merit, the materials being uncommonly picturesque, and well put together: I should dearly like to have the same subject (it is the cottage at Glencoign, by Ulleswater) treated by you. In the poem I have just written, you will find one situation which, if the work should ever become familiarly known, would furnish as fine a subject for a picture as any thing I remember in poetry ancient or modern. I need not mention what it is, as when you read the poem you cannot miss it. We have at last had, by the same post, two letters from Coleridge, long and melancholy; and also, from Keswick, an account so depressing as to the

f his health, that I should have set off imme-
y to London, to see him, if I had not myself
onfined by indisposition.

hope that Davy is by this time perfectly re-
to health. Believe me, my dear Sir George,

"Most sincerely yours,
"W. WORDSWORTH."

CHAPTER XXVI.

WORDSWORTH AT COLEORTON.

"I AM now," says Mr. Wordsworth to Mr. Wrangham, November 7. 1806, "with my family at Coleorton, near Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire, occupying a house, for the winter, of Sir George Beaumont's; our own cottage at Grasmere being far too small for our family to winter in, though we manage well enough in it during the summer."

Sir George Beaumont was now engaged in rebuilding the Hall and laying out the grounds at Coleorton, and this circumstance gave occasion to frequent communications between him and Mr. Wordsworth on the principles of beauty in Houses, Parks, and Gardens. The following letter, written by Wordsworth before he came to Coleorton, is an interesting specimen of this correspondence, and serves to show how the same elements which produce what is graceful in poetry are the cause of beauty in other kindred arts, and that there are certain elemental laws of a *prima philosophia* (as it has been called) which are of general application. On a knowledge and careful study of these laws all true taste in the arts must rest. And it may be of service, even to those who are professionally most conversant with the practical details of art, to have their attention called to these primary principles, without which, all technical dexterity is little better than mere superficial sciolism. The principles laid down in this letter may also be commended to the attention of the English gentry and aristocracy.

To Sir George Beaumont, Bart.

"*Grasmere, Oct.* 17. 1805.

"My dear Sir George,

"I was very glad to learn that you had room for me at Coleorton, and far more so, that your health was so much mended. Lady Beaumont's last letter to my sister has made us wish that you were fairly through your present engagements with workmen and builders, and, as to improvements, had smoothed over the first difficulties, and gotten things into a way of improving themselves. I do not suppose that any man ever built a house, without finding in the progress of it obstacles that were unforeseen, and something that might have been better planned; things teasing and vexatious when they come, however the mind may have been made up at the outset to a general expectation of the kind.

"With respect to the grounds, you have there the advantage of being in good hands, namely, those of Nature; and, assuredly, whatever petty crosses from contrariety of opinion or any other cause you may now meet with, these will soon disappear, and leave nothing behind but satisfaction and harmony. Setting out from the distinction made by Coleridge which you mention, that your house will belong to the country, and not the country be an appendage to your house, you cannot be wrong. Indeed, in the present state of society, I see nothing interesting either to the imagination or the heart, and, of course, nothing which true taste can approve, in any interference with Nature, grounded upon any other principle. In times when the feudal system was in its vigour, and the personal importance of every chieftain might be said to depend entirely upon the extent of his landed property and rights of seignory; when the king, in the habits of people's minds, was considered as the primary and true proprietor of the soil, which was granted out by him to different lords, and again by them to their several tenants under them, for the joint defence of all; there might have been something imposing to the imagination in the whole face of a district, testifying, obtrusively even, its dependence upon its chief. Such an image would have been in the spirit of the society, implying power, grandeur, military state, and security; and, less directly, in the person of the chief, high birth, and knightly education and accomplishments; in short, the most of what was then deemed interesting or affecting. Yet, with the exception of large parks and forests, nothing of this kind was known at that time, and these were left in their wild state, so that such display of ownership, so far from taking from the beauty of Nature, was itself a chief cause of that beauty being left unspoiled and unimpaired. The *improvements*, when the place was sufficiently tranquil to admit of any, though absurd and monstrous in themselves, were confined (as our present laureate has observed, I remember, in one of his essays) to an acre or two about the house in the shape of garden with terraces, &c. So that Nature had greatly the advantage in those days, when what has been called English gardening was unheard of. This is now beginning to be perceived, and we are setting out to travel backwards. Painters and poets have had the credit of being reckoned the fathers of English gardening; they will also have, hereafter, the better praise of being fathers of a better taste. It was a misconception of the meaning and principles of poets and painters which gave countenance to the modern system of gardening, which is now, I hope, on the decline; in other words, we are submitting to the rule which you at present are guided by, that of having our houses belonging to the country, which will of course lead us back to the simplicity of Nature. And leaving your own individual sentiments and present work out of the question, what good can come of any other guide, under any circumstances? We have, indeed, distinctions of rank, hereditary legislators, and large landed proprietors; but from numberless causes the state of society is so much altered, that nothing of that lofty or imposing interest, formerly attached to large property in land, can now exist; none of the poetic pride, and pomp, and circumstance; nor anything that can be considered as making amends for violation done to the holiness of Nature. Let us take an extreme case, such as a residence of a Duke of Norfolk, or Northumberland: of course you would expect a mansion, in some degree answerable to their consequence, with all conveniences. The names of Howard and Percy will always stand high in the regards of Englishmen; but it is degrading, not only to such families as these, but to every really interesting one, to suppose that their importance will be most felt where most displayed, particularly in the way I am now alluding to. Besides, as to what concerns the past, a man would be sadly astray, who should go, for example, to modernise Alnwick and its dependencies, with his head full of the ancient Percies: he would find nothing there which would remind him of them, except by contrast; and of that kind of admonition he would, indeed, have enough. But this by the by, for it is against the principle itself I am contending, and not the misapplication of it. After what was said above, I may ask, if anything connected with the families of Howard and Percy, and their rank and influence, and thus with the state of government and society, could, in the present age, be deemed a recompence for their thrusting themselves in between us and Nature. I know nothing which to me would be so pleasing or affecting, as to be able to say when I am in the midst of a large estate — This man is not the victim of his condition; he is not the spoiled child of worldly grandeur; the thought of *himself* does not take the lead in his enjoyments; he is, when he ought to be, lowly-minded, and has human feeling; he has a true relish of simplicity, and therefore stands the best chance of being happy; at least, without it there is no happiness, because there can be no true sense of the bounty and beauty of the creation, or insight into the constitution of the human mind. Let a man of wealth and influence show, by the appearance of the country in his neighbourhood, that he treads in the steps of the good sense of the age, and occasionally goes foremost; let him give countenance to improvements in agriculture, steering clear of the pedantry of it, and showing that its grossest utilities will connect themselves harmoniously with the more intellectual arts, and even thrive the best under such connection; let him do his utmost to be surrounded with tenants living comfortably, which will bring always with it the best of all graces that a country can have — flourishing fields and happy-looking houses; and, in that part of his estate devoted to park and pleasure-ground, let him keep himself as much out of sight as possible; let Nature be all in all, taking care that everything done by man shall be in the way of being adopted by her. If people choose that a great mansion should be the chief figure in a country, let this kind of keeping prevail through the picture, and true taste will find no fault.

"I am writing now rather for writing's sake than anything else, for I have many remembrances beating about in my head which you would little suspect. I have been thinking of you, and Coleridge, and our Scotch tour, and Lord Lowther's grounds. I have had before me the tremendously long ell-wide gravel walks of the Duke of Athol, among the wild glens of Blair, Bruar Water, and Dunkeld, brushed neatly, without a blade of grass or weed upon them, or anything that bore traces of a human footstep — much indeed of human hands, but wear or tear of foot was none. Thence I passed to our neighbour, Lord Lowther. You know that his predecessor, greatly, without doubt, to the advantage of the place, left it to take care of itself. The present lord seems disposed to do something, but not much. He has a neighbour, a Quaker, an amiable, inoffensive man[1], and a little of a poet too, who has amused himself, upon his own small estate upon the Emont, in twining pathways along the banks of the river, making little cells and bowers with inscriptions of his own writing, all very pretty as not spreading far. He is at present

---

[1] Mr. Thomas Wilkinson, mentioned above, p. 55. 323.

Arbiter Elegantiarum, or master of the grounds, at Lowther, and what he has done hitherto is very well, as it is little more than making accessible what could not before be got at. You know something of Lowther. I believe a more delightful spot is not under the sun. Last summer I had a charming walk along the river, for which I was indebted to this man, whose intention is to carry the walk along the river-side till it joins the great road at Lowther Bridge, which you will recollect, just under Brougham, about a mile from Penrith. This to my great sorrow! for the manufactured walk, which was absolutely necessary in many places, will in one place pass through a few hundred yards of forest ground, and will there efface the most beautiful specimen of a forest pathway ever seen by human eyes, and which I have paced many an hour, when I was a youth, with some of those I best loved. There is a continued opening between the trees, a narrow slip of green turf besprinkled with flowers, chiefly daisies, and here it is that this pretty path plays its pranks, wearing away the turf and flowers at its pleasure. When I took the walk I was speaking of, last summer, it was Sunday. I met several of the people of the country posting to and from church, in different parts; and in a retired spot by the river-side were two musicians (belonging probably to some corps of volunteers) playing upon the hautboy and clarionet. You may guess I was not a little delighted; and as you had been a visiter at Lowther, I could not help wishing you were with me. And now I am brought to the sentiment which occasioned this detail; I may say, brought back to my subject, which is this,—that all just and solid pleasure in natural objects rests upon two pillars, God and Man.

Laying out grounds, as it is called, may be considered as a liberal art, in some sort like poetry and painting; and its object, like that of all the liberal arts, is, or ought to be, to move the affections under the control of good sense; that is, those of the best and wisest: but, speaking with more precision, it is to assist Nature in moving the affections, and, surely, as I have said, the affections of those who have the deepest perception of the beauty of Nature; who have the most valuable feelings, that is, the most permanent, the most independent, the most ennobling, connected with Nature and human life. No liberal art aims merely at the gratification of an individual or a class: the painter or poet is degraded in proportion as he does so; the true servants of the Arts pay homage to the human kind as impersonated in unwarped and enlightened minds. If this be so when we are merely putting together words or colours, how much more ought the feeling to prevail when we are in the midst of the realities of things; of the beauty and harmony, of the joy and happiness of loving creatures; of men and children, of birds and beasts, of hills and streams, and trees and flowers; with the changes of night and day, evening and morning, summer and winter; and all their unwearied actions and energies, as benign in the spirit that animates them as they are beautiful and grand in that form and clothing which is given to them for the delight of our senses! But I must stop, for you feel these things as deeply as I; more deeply, if it were only for this, that you have lived longer. What then shall we say of many great mansions with their unqualified expulsion of human creatures from their neighbourhood, happy or not; houses, which do what is fabled of the upas tree, — breathe out death and desolation! I know you will feel with m here, both as a man and a lover and professor of th arts. I was glad to hear from Lady Beaumont th you did not think of removing your village. (course much here will depend upon circumstanc above all, with what kind of inhabitants, from th nature of the employments in that district, the villag is likely to be stocked. But, for my part, strip my neighbourhood of human beings, and I should thin it one of the greatest privations I could underg You have all the poverty of solitude, nothing of its elevation. In a word, if I were disposed to write a sermon (and this is something like one) upon the subject of taste in natural beauty, I should take for my text the little pathway in Lowther woods, and all which I had to say would begin and end in the human heart, as under the direction of the Divine Nature, conferring value on the objects of the senses, and pointing out what is valuable in them.

"I began this subject with Coleorton in my thoughts, and a confidence, that whatever difficulties or crosses (as of many good things it is not easy to choose the best) you might meet with in the practical application of your principles of taste, yet, being what they are, you will soon be pleased and satisfied. Only (if I may take the freedom to say so) do not give way too much to others: considering what your studies and pursuits have been, your own judgment must be the best: professional men may suggest hints, but I would keep the decision to myself.

"Lady Beaumont utters something like an apprehension that the slowness of workmen or other impediments may prevent our families meeting at oleorton next summer. We shall be sorry for this, he more so, as the same cause will hinder your oming hither. At all events, we shall depend upon er frankness, which we take most kindly indeed; I nean, on the promise she has made, to let us know vhether you are gotten so far through your work as o make it comfortable for us all to be together.

"I cannot close this letter without a word about nyself. I am sorry to say I am not yet settled to any erious employment. The expectation of Coleridge ot a little unhinges me, and, still more, the number f visitors we have had; but winter is approaching, nd I have good hopes. I mentioned Michael Angelo's poetry some time ago; it is the most difficult to construe I ever met with, but just what you would expect from such a man, showing abundantly how conversant his soul was with great things. There is a mistake in the world concerning the Italian language; the poetry of Dante and Michael Angelo proves, that if there be little majesty and strength in Italian verse, the fault is in the authors, and not in the tongue. I can translate, and have translated, two books of Ariosto, at the rate, nearly, of 100 lines a day; but so much meaning has been put by Michael Angelo into so little room, and that meaning sometimes so excellent in itself, that I found the difficulty of translating him insurmountable. I attempted, at least, fifteen of the sonnets, but could not anywhere succeed. I have sent you the only one I was able to finish: it is far from being the best, or most characteristic, but the others were too much for me.

. . . . . .

"I began this letter about a week ago, having been interrupted. I mention this, because I have on this account to apologise to Lady Beaumont, and to my sister also, whose intention it was to have written, but being very much engaged, she put it off as I was writing. We have been weaning Dorothy, and since, she has had a return of the croup from an imprudent exposure on a very cold day. But she is doing well again; and my sister will write very soon. Lady Beaumont inquired how game might be sent us. There is a direct conveyance from Manchester to Kendal by the mail, and a parcel directed for me, to be delivered at Kendal, immediately, to John Brockbank, Ambleside, postman, would, I dare say, find its way to us expeditiously enough; only you will have the goodness to mention in your letters when you do send anything, otherwise we may not be aware of any mistake.

"I am glad the print will be acceptable, and will send it any way you shall think proper, though perhaps, as it would only make a small parcel, there might be some risk in trusting it to the waggon or mail, unless it could be conveniently inquired after. No news of Coleridge. The length of this letter is quite formidable; forgive it. Farewell, and believe me, my dear Sir George,

"Your truly affectionate friend,
"W. WORDSWORTH."

To this letter the following must be added as a postscript.

To Sir George Beaumont.

"*Grasmere, Feb.* 11. 1806.

"There were some parts in the long letter which I wrote about laying out grounds in which the expression must have been left imperfect. I like splendid mansions in their proper places, and have no objection to large, or even obtrusive, houses in themselves. My dislike is to that system of gardening which, because a house happens to be large, or splendid, and stands at the head of a large domain, establishes it, therefore, as a principle that the house ought to *dye* all the surrounding country with a strength of colouring, and to an extent proportionate to its own importance. This system is founded, I think, in false taste—false feeling; and its effects are disgusting in the highest degree. The reason you mention as having induced you to build, was worthy of you, and gave me the highest pleasure; but I hope God will grant you and Lady Beaumont life to enjoy the fruit of your exertions, for many years.

"We have lately had much anxiety about Coleridge. What can have become of him? It must be upwards of three months since he landed at Trieste. Has he returned to Malta, think you? or what can have befallen him? He has never since been heard of.

"Lady Beaumont spoke of your having been ill of a cold: I hope you are better. We have all here been, more or less, deranged in the same way.

"We have to thank you for a present of game, which arrived in good time.

"Never have a moment's uneasiness about ans ing my letters. We are all well at present, unite in affectionate wishes to you and Lady Be mont. Believe me,

"Your sincere friend,
"W. Wordsworth."

Mr. Wordsworth passed through London on way to Coleorton, and has described certain sce which he saw in the metropolis. The poem entit "Stray Pleasures,"[1] he says, was then composed. "The Power of Music,"[2] and "Stargazers written at the same time, may suggest to the in bitants of London, how the imagination may f food for its nourishment in the Strand and Leice Square, as well as in the vale of Grasmere, and on summits of Helvellyn.

Mr. Coleridge returned to London from the C tinent in the summer of 1806; and in the autum went to visit his friends, Wordsworth and his fam who were then at Coleorton. There he listene "The Prelude," read by the author, and he recor the impression which it made upon him in the ve which he wrote on the subject, and afterwa published in "The Sibylline Leaves."[4]

Among the poems connected with the ground Coleorton must not be forgotten the "Inscriptio from Wordsworth's pen, some of which still ad those beautiful walks and glades, and are printe the Poet's works.[5]

---

[1] Vol. ii. p. 51. [2] Vol. ii. p. 105. [3] Vol. ii. p.

[4] p. 197.; or Poetical Works, vol. i. p. 206. See also his T Talk, vol. ii. p. 70.

[5] Vol. v. p. 58—60.

Concerning these, the author gave the following reminiscences[1]:—

Inscriptions, No. 1.—"In the grounds of Coleorton, these verses are engraved on a stone, placed near the tree which was thriving and spreading when I saw it in the summer of 1841."

No. 2.—"This niche is in the sandstone rock in the winter-garden at Coleorton, which garden, as has been elsewhere said, was made under our direction, out of an old unsightly quarry. While the labourers were at work, Mrs. Wordsworth, my sister, and I, used to amuse ourselves, occasionally, in scooping this seat out of the soft stone. It is of the size, with something of the appearance, of a stall in a cathedral. This inscription is not engraven, as the former of the two following are, in the grounds."

Some of these Inscriptions may suggest a comparison with poems of Theocritus and the Greek Anthology, and with some of the minor pieces of Catullus, and other productions of antiquity, inscribed on the rocky walls of grottos, or on pedestals of statues in fair gardens or cool alcoves. This kind of composition has not been much cultivated in England. Our climate does not seem favourable to *hypæthral* versification. And where it has been attempted, it has in general been marked by too great diffuseness and redundancy, faults not easily pardoned by in-door readers, and liable to severer criticism in out-door compositions.

While Mr. Wordsworth was in Leicestershire, 1806–7, his mind often travelled northward, and reverted to his earlier associations. It recurred to the neighbourhood of Penrith. The *Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle* [1], was then composed. "This poem," he says[2], "was composed at Coleorton while I was walking to and fro along the path that led from Sir George Beaumont's *farm-house*, where we resided, to the Hall, which was building at that time."

---

[1] MSS. I. F.

He wrote, *Two voices are there*, in the "Sonnets to Liberty," at the same time.

In the spring of 1807, he and Mrs. Wordsworth went to London, where they remained a month, Miss Wordsworth and the children still remaining at Coleorton; and it was on this occasion, on the eve of their return from London, that she wrote the poem, "The Mother's Return." [3]

"A month, sweet little ones, is past,
Since your dear mother went away;
And she, to-morrow, will return;
To-morrow is the happy day."

Wordsworth was accompanied by Walter Scott on his return to Coleorton, where he remained till the summer of 1807. He passed a part of the winter of that year at Stockton-on-Tees, at the house of Mr. John Hutchinson, and in the spring of 1808 returned to Grasmere.

The following letters, written some time after his return to Grasmere, refer to the Inscriptions at Coleorton, and may conclude this chapter.

"My dear Sir George,

"Had there been room at the end of the small avenue of lime-trees for planting a spacious circle of the same trees, the urn might have been placed in the centre, with the inscription thus altered:

---

[1] Vol. ii. p. 144. [2] MSS. I. F. [3] Vol. i. p. 152.

'Ye lime-trees, ranged around this hallowed urn,
Shoot forth with lively power at spring's return!

. . . . .

Here may some painter sit in future days,
Some future poet meditate his lays!
Not mindless of that distant age, renowned,
When inspiration hovered o'er this ground,
The haunt of him who sang, how spear and shield
In civil conflict met on Bosworth field,
And of that famous youth (full soon removed
From earth!) by mighty Shakespear's self approved,
Fletcher's associate, Jonson's friend beloved.'

"The first couplet of the above, as it before stood, would have appeared ludicrous, if the stone had remained after the tree might have been gone. The couplet relating to the household virtues did not accord with the painter and the poet; the former being allegorical figures; the latter, living men.

"What follows, I composed yesterday morning, thinking there might be no impropriety in placing it, so as to be *visible only to a person sitting within the niche* which we hollowed out of the sandstone in the winter-garden. I am told that this is, in the present form of the niche, impossible; but I shall be most ready, when I come to Coleorton, to scoop out a place for it, if Lady Beaumont think it worth while.

INSCRIPTION.

'Oft is the medal faithful to its trust
When temples, columns, towers, are laid in dust;
And 'tis a common ordinance of fate
That things obscure and small outlive the great.
Hence,' &c.

"These inscriptions have all one fault, they are too long; but I was unable to do justice to the thought in less room. The second has brought Sir John Beaumont and his brother Francis so lively to my mind, that I recur to the plan of republishing the former's poems, perhaps in connection with those of Francis. Could any further *search* be made after the 'Crown of Thorns?' If I recollect right, Southey applied without effect to the numerous friends he had among the collectors. The best way, perhaps, of managing this republication would be, to print it in a very elegant type and paper, and not many copies, to be sold high, so that it might be prized by the collectors as a curiosity. Bearing in mind how many excellent things there are in Sir John Beaumont's little volume, I am somewhat mortified at this mode of honouring his memory; but in the present state of the taste of this country, I cannot flatter myself that poems of that character would win their way into general circulation. Should it appear advisable, another edition might afterwards be published, upon a plan which would place the book within the reach of those who have little money to spare. I remain, my dear Sir George,

"Your affectionate friend,
"W. WORDSWORTH."

"*Grasmere, Sat., Nov.* 16. 1811.

"My dear Sir George,

"I have to thank you for two letters. Lady Beaumont also will accept my acknowledgments for the interesting letter with which she favoured me.

. . . .

"I learn from Mrs. Coleridge, who has lately heard from C——, that Alston, the painter, has arrived in London. Coleridge speaks of him as a most interesting person. He has brought with him a few pictures from his own pencil, among others, a Cupid and Psyche, which, in C.'s opinion, has not, for colouring, been surpassed since Titian. C. is about to deliver a Course of Lectures upon Poetry, at some Institution in the city. He is well, and I learn that the 'Friend' has been a good deal inquired after lately. For ourselves, we never hear from him.

"I am glad that the inscriptions please you. It did always appear to me, that inscriptions, particularly those in verse, or in a dead language, were never supposed *necessarily* to be the composition of those in whose name they appeared If a more striking, or more dramatic effect could be produced, I have always thought, that in an epitaph or memorial of any kind, a father, or husband, &c. might be introduced, speaking, without any absolute deception being intended: that is, the reader is understood to be at liberty to say to himself,— these verses, or this Latin, may be the composition of some unknown person, and not that of the father, widow, or friend, from whose hand or voice they profess to proceed. If the composition be natural, affecting, or beautiful, it is all that is required. This, at least, was my view of the subject, or I should not have adopted that mode. However, in respect to your scruples, which I feel are both delicate and reasonable, I have altered the verses; and I have only to regret that the alteration is not more happily done. But I never found anything more difficult. I wished to preserve the expression *patrimonial grounds*, but I found this impossible, on account of the awkwardness of the pronouns, he and his, as applied to Reynolds, and to yourself. This, even where it does not produce confusion, is always inelegant. I was, therefore, obliged to drop it; so that we must be content, I fear, with the inscription as it stands below. As you mention that the first copy was mislaid, I will transcribe the first part from that; but you can either choose the Dome or the Abbey as you like.

'Ye lime-trees, ranged before this hallowed urn,
Shoot forth with lively power at spring's return;
And be not slow a stately growth to rear
Of pillars, branching off from year to year,
Till ye have framed, at length, a darksome aisle,
Like a recess within that sacred pile
Where Reynolds, 'mid our country's noblest dead,
In the last sanctity of fame is laid,'
&c. &c.

"I hope this will do: I tried a hundred different ways, but cannot hit upon anything better. I am sorry to learn from Lady Beaumont, that there is reason to believe that our cedar is already perished. I am sorry for it. The verses upon that subject you and Lady B. praise highly; and certainly, if they have merit, as I cannot but think they have, your discriminating praises have pointed it out. The alteration in the beginning, I think with you, is a great improvement, and the first line is, to my ear, very rich and grateful. As to the 'Female and Male,' I know not how to get rid of it; for that circumstance gives the recess an appropriate interest. I remember, Mr. Bowles, the poet, objected to the word ravishment at the end of the sonnet to the winter-garden; yet it has the authority of all the first-rate poets, for instance, Milton:

'In whose sight all things joy, with *ravishment*,
Attracted by thy beauty still to gaze.'

Objections upon these grounds merit more attention in regard to inscriptions than any other sort of composition; and on this account, the lines (I mean those upon the niche) had better be suppressed, for it is not improbable that the altering of them might cost me more trouble than writing a hundred fresh ones.

"We were happy to hear that your mother, Lady Beaumont, was so surprisingly well. You do not mention the school at Coleorton. Pray how is Wilkie in health, and also as to progress in his art? I do not doubt that I shall like Arnold's picture; but he would have been a better painter, if his genius had led him to *read* more in the early part of his life. Wilkie's style of painting does not require that the mind should be fed from books; but I do not think it possible to *excel* in *landscape* painting without a strong tincture of the poetic spirit."

"*Grasmere, Wednesday, Nov.* 20. 1811.

"My dear Lady Beaumont,

"When you see this you will think I mean to overrun you with inscriptions: I do not mean to tax you with putting them up, only with reading them. The following I composed yesterday morning, in a walk from Brathway, whither I had been to accompany my sister.

FOR A SEAT IN THE GROVES OF COLEORTON.

'Beneath yon eastern ridge, the craggy bound
Rugged and high of Charnwood's forest-ground,
Stand yet, but, Stranger! hidden from thy view,
The ivied ruins of forlorn Grace Dieu,'
&c. &c.

"I hope that neither you nor Sir George will think that the above takes from the effect of the mention of Francis Beaumont in the poem upon the cedar. Grace Dieu is itself so interesting a spot, and has naturally and historically such a connection with Coleorton, that I could not deny myself the pleasure of paying it this mark of attention. The thought of writing the inscription occurred to me many years ago. I took the liberty of transcribing for Sir George an alteration which I had made in the inscription for St. Herbert's island; I was not then quite satisfied with it; I have since retouched it, and will trouble you to read him the following, which I hope will give you pleasure.

'This island, guarded from profane approach
By mountains high and waters widely spread,
Gave to St. Herbert a benign retreat,'
&c. &c.

"I ought to mention, that the line,

'And things of holy use unhallowed lie,'

is taken from the following of Daniel,

'Strait all that holy was unhallowed lies.'

I will take this occasion of recommending to you (if you happen to have Daniel's poems) to read the epistle addressed to the Lady Margaret, Countess of Cumberland, beginning,

'He that of such a height hath built his mind.'

The whole poem is composed in a strain of meditative morality more dignified and affecting than anything of the kind I ever read. It is, besides, strikingly applicable to the revolutions of the present times.

"My dear Lady Beaumont, your letter and the accounts it contains of the winter-garden, gave me great pleasure. I cannot but think, that under your care, it will grow up into one of the most beautiful and interesting spots in England. We all here have a longing desire to see it. I have mentioned the high opinion we have of it to a couple of my friends, persons of taste living in this country, who are determined, the first time they are called up to London, to turn aside to visit it; which I said they might without scruple do, if they mentioned my name to the gardener. My sister begs me to say, that she is aware how long she has been in your debt, and that she should have written before now, but that, as I have, latterly, been in frequent communication with Coleorton, she thought it as well to defer answering your letter. Do you see the 'Courier' newspaper at Dunmow? I ask on account of a little poem upon the comet, which I have read in it to-day. Though with several defects, and some feeble and constrained expressions, it has great merit, and is far superior to the run, not merely of newspaper, but of modern poetry in general. I half suspect it to be Coleridge's, for though it is, in parts, inferior to him, I know no other writer of the day who can do so well. It consists of five stanzas, in the measure of the 'Fairy Queen.' It is to be found in last Saturday's paper, November, 16th. If you don't see the 'Courier' we will transcribe it for you. As so much of this letter is taken up with my verses, I will e'en trespass still further on your indulgence, and conclude with a sonnet, which I wrote some time ago upon the poet, John Dyer. If you have not read the 'Fleece,' I would strongly recommend it to you. The character of Dyer, as a patriot, a citizen, and a tender-hearted friend of humanity was, in some respects, injurious to him as a poet, and has induced him to dwell, in his poem, upon processes which, however important in themselves, were unsusceptible of being poetically treated. Accordingly, his poem is, in several places, dry and heavy ; but its beauties are innumerable, and of a high order. In point of *imagination* and purity of style, I am not sure that he is not superior to any writer in verse since the time of Milton.

SONNET.

'Bard of the Fleece! whose skilful genius made
That work a living landscape fair and bright;
Nor hallowed less by musical delight
Than those soft scenes through which thy childhood strayed,
Those southern tracts of Cambria, deep embayed,'
&c. &c.

"In the above is one whole line from the 'Fleece,' and two other expressions. When you read the 'Fleece' you will recognise them. I remain, my dear Lady Beaumont,

"Your sincere friend,
"W. WORDSWORTH."

CHAPTER XXVII.

HIS CHILDREN.

THE verses "on the Mother's Return," mentioned in the last chapter, furnish an appropriate occasion for reference to the poems in which Mr. Wordsworth speaks of those to whom the above-mentioned verses of his sister were addressed. His family then consisted of three children:

John, his eldest son, born on the 18th of June, 1803;
Dorothy, or (as she is called in her father's poems, and as she was known to all around her) Dora, born August 16. 1804; the birth-day, also, of her mother;
Thomas, born June 16. 1806.

Two other children were born after that date:

Catharine, September 6. 1808;
William, May 12. 1810.

The sonnet that concludes the series on the Scotch tour in 1803[1], ends with an image of the joy which would appear on the face of his first child, on the tidings of his father's return:

> "Yea, let our Mary's one companion child,
> That hath her six weeks' solitude beguiled,

---

[1] Vol. iii. p. 30.

With intimations, manifold and dear,
While we have wandered over wood and wild,
Smile on his mother now with bolder cheer."

In the following year, his daughter Dora was born; and on the 16th September of that year, a month after her birth, he wrote the lines[1],

"Hast thou then survived,
Mild offspring of infirm humanity?
. . . . Hail to thee!
Frail, feeble monthling, . . . on thy face
Smiles are beginning, like the beams of dawn,
To shoot and circulate; smiles have there been seen;
Tranquil assurances that heaven supports
The feeble motions of thy life, and cheers
Thy loneliness: or shall those smiles be called
Feelers of love, put forth as if to explore
This untried world, and to prepare thy way
Through a strait passage intricate and dim?"

A few weeks passed away; autumn arrived; the withered leaves in the cottage-orchard at Grasmere began to fall:

"Through the calm and frosty air
Of the morning, bright and fair,
Eddying round and round they sink
Softly, slowly."[2]

The kitten, on the wall of the garden, sports with the leaves as they fall to the ground; the infant in the father's arms is delighted with the show:

"Such a light of gladness breaks,
Pretty Kitten! from thy freaks;

---

[1] Vol. ii. p. 65.

[2] Vol. ii. p. 62. 64.

Spreads with such a living grace,
O'er my little Dora's face."

And the Poet is cheered by the sight, and draws a gladsome moral from the whole:

"I will have my careless season
Spite of melancholy reason;
Will walk through life in such a way
That, when time brings on decay,
Now and then I may possess
Hours of perfect gladsomeness,

. . . . . .

Keep the sprightly soul awake,
And have faculties to take
Even from things by sorrow wrought,
Matter for a jocund thought;
Spite of care and spite of grief,
To gambol with life's falling leaf."

It will not be an uninteresting or unprofitable task to look forward a few years, and to compare the poem just mentioned with another of a serious cast, not, however, unmingled with playfulness, addressed to the same daughter, at a different season of the year, — "the Longest Day."[1]

"Dora! sport, as now thou sportest
  On this platform, light and free;
Take thy bliss, — while longest, shortest,
  Are indifferent to thee!

. . . . .

"Yet, at this impressive season,
  Words which tenderness can speak,
From the truths of homely reason,
  Might exalt the loveliest cheek;

---

[1] Vol. i. p. 174.

"And while shades to shades succeeding
Steal the landscape from the sight,
I would urge this moral pleading,
Last forerunner of 'Good Night.'

"Summer ebbs; each day that follows
Is a reflux from on high,
Tending to the darksome hollows,
Where the frosts of winter lie.

. . . . . .

"Now, even now, ere wrapped in slumber,
Fix thine eyes upon the sea
That absorbs Time, Space, and Number, —
Look thou to Eternity!"

About the same time were written those pathetic lines in which the Poet, who was often affected by disorder and weakness of eyesight, gives vent to foreboding apprehensions of blindness. In quest of parallels to his own case, he recurs in imagination, first, to the Samson Agonistes of Milton, and then to the Œdipus of Sophocles. In this mood of mind, he thus addresses his daughter:

"'*A little onward lend thy guiding hand*
To these dark steps, a little further on!'
— What trick of memory to *my* voice hath brought
This mournful iteration? For though Time,
The Conqueror, crowns the Conquered, on this brow
Planting his favourite silver diadem,
Nor he, nor minister of his — intent
To run before him, hath enrolled me yet,
Though not unmenaced, among those who lean
Upon a living staff, with borrowed sight.
— O my *Antigone!* my beloved child!
Should that day come . . ."[1]

---

[1] Vol. iv. p. 218.

In later years, the imagery of mythology gave way to the sober and more touching language of real life, and the verse now stands,

"O my *own Dora,* my beloved child!"

He concludes the poem with a grateful commemoration of some of the uses of eyesight, "not unmenaced," but still preserved to him:

"Now also shall the page of classic lore,
To these glad eyes from bondage freed, again
Lie open; and the book of Holy Writ,
Again unfolded, passage clear shall yield
To heights more glorious still, and into shades
More awful, where, advancing hand in hand,
We may be taught, O Darling of my care!
To calm the affections, elevate the soul,
And consecrate our lives to truth and love."

The poetical portrait which he has drawn of his beloved daughter ought to find a place here[1]:

"Open, ye thickets! let her fly,
Swift as a Thracian Nymph, o'er field and height!
For She, to all but those who love her, shy,
Would gladly vanish from a Stranger's sight;
Though where she is beloved and loves,
Light as the wheeling butterfly she moves;
Her happy spirit as a bird is free
That rifles blossoms on a tree
Turning them inside out with arch audacity.
Alas! how little can a moment show
Of an eye where feeling plays
In ten thousand dewy rays;
A face o'er which a thousand shadows go!
— She stops — is fastened to that rivulet's side;

---

[1] From the Triad, vol. ii. p. 181.

And there (while, with sedater mien,
O'er timid waters that have scarcely left
Their birth-place in the rocky cleft,
She bends) at leisure may be seen
Features to old ideal grace allied,
Amid their smiles and dimples dignified —
Fit countenance for the soul of primal truth;
The bland composure of eternal youth!

"What more changeful than the sea?
But over his great tides
Fidelity presides;
And this light-hearted Maiden constant is as he.
High is her aim as heaven above,
And wide as ether her good-will;
And, like the lowly reed, her love
Can drink its nurture from the scantiest rill:
Insight as keen as frosty star
Is to *her* charity no bar,
Nor interrupts her frolic graces
When she is, far from these wild places,
Encircled by familiar faces.

"O the charm that manners draw,
Nature, from thy genuine law!
If from what her hand would do,
Her voice would utter, aught ensue
Untoward or unfit;
She, in benign affections pure,
In self-forgetfulness secure,
Sheds round the transient harm or vague mischance
A light unknown to tutored elegance:
Her's is not a cheek shame-stricken,
But her blushes are joy-flushes;
And the fault (if fault it be)
Only ministers to quicken
Laughter-loving gaiety,

And kindle sportive wit —
Leaving this Daughter of the mountains free
As if she knew that Oberon king of Faery
Had crossed her purpose with some quaint vagary,
And heard his viewless bands
Over their mirthful triumph clapping hands."

The influence exercised by Wordsworth's poetry is ue, in great measure, to his home, as well as to his eart. He was blessed, in a remarkable degree, in all hose domestic relations which exercise and hallow he affections. His cottage, its beautiful neighbour-ood, the happiness he enjoyed in its garden, and ithin its doors, all these breathed a moral music into is heart, and enabled him to pour forth strains hich, without such influences upon him, would ave been unheard, and which have made him, what e is in an eminent degree, the poet of domestic life, nd the teacher of domestic virtue. If he had not een a husband and a father, happy in his children, e could never have drawn that beautiful portrait,

"Loving she is, and tractable though wild,"[1]

n which, by the happiness of children in themselves, e teaches a lesson of unambitious contentment to ll :

"This happy creature, of herself
Is all-sufficient, — solitude to her
Is blithe society :"

he is like

" the faggot that sparkles on the hearth,
Not less when unattended and alone
Than when both young and old sit gathered round,
And take delight in its activity : "

---

[1] Vol. i. p. 150.

a beautiful picture of self-forgetfulness, suggested by his second daughter, Catharine, then three years old. What *his* children were to the painter Albano, *that*, and much more, were his own children to the Poet Wordsworth.

Soon after these lines were written, Catharine, and her brother Thomas, who was two years and eleven weeks older, were taken for change of air and restoration of health to the sea-side, on the coast of Cumberland, under Black Comb (which he has described in two several poems[1] written, after this visit, in 1813), near Bootle, of which his friend Dr. Satterthwaite was then incumbent. This was in the summer of 1811. The journey from Grasmere to the sea-side is described in that interesting and beautiful "Poetical Epistle to Sir George Beaumont:"[2]

"Far from our home, by Grasmere's quiet Lake,
From the Vale's peace which all her fields partake,
Here on the bleakest point of Cumbria's shore
We sojourn, stunned by Ocean's ceaseless roar."

Concerning this "Epistle" Mr. Wordsworth dictated the following notices.[3]

Epistle to Sir G. H. Beaumont, Bart. — "This poem opened, when first written, with a paragraph that has been transferred as an introduction to the first series of my 'Scotch Memorials.' The journey, of which the first part is here described, was from Grasmere to Bootle, on the south-west coast of Cumberland, the whole along mountain-roads, through a beautiful country, and we had fine weather. The verses end with our breakfast at the Head of Yewdale, in a yeoman's house, which, like all the other property in that sequestered vale, has passed, or is passing, into the hands of Mr. James Marshall, of Monk Coniston, in Mr. Knott's, the late owner's time, called the Waterhead. Our hostess married a Mr. Oldfield, a lieutenant in the navy; they lived together for some time at Hackett, where she still resides as his widow. It was in front of that house, on the mountain-side, near which stood the peasant who, while we were passing at a distance, saluted us, waving a kerchief in his hand, as described in the poem. The dog which we met soon after our starting, had belonged to Mr. Rowlandson, who for forty years was curate at Grasmere, in place of the rector, who lived to extreme old age, in a state of insanity. Of this Mr. R. much might be said, both with reference to his character, and the way in which he was regarded by his parishioners. He was a man of a robust frame, had a firm voice and authoritative manner, of strong natural talents, of which he was himself conscious." Some anecdotes were then told by Mr. W. of his character, which are omitted here. He proceeded as follows: "Notwithstanding all that has been said, this man, on account of his talents and superior education, was looked up to by his parishioners, who, without a single exception, lived at that time (and most of them upon their own small inheritances) in a state of republican equality, a condition favourable to the growth of kindly feelings among them, and, in a striking degree, exclusive to temptations to gross vice and scandalous behaviour. As a pastor, their curate did little or nothing for them; but what could more strikingly set forth the efficacy of the Church of England, through its Ordinances and Liturgy, than that, in spite of the unworthiness of the minister, his church was regularly attended; and though there was not much appearance in his flock of what might be called animated piety, intoxication was rare, and dissolute morals unknown? With the Bible they were, for the most part, well acquainted, and, as was strikingly shown when they were under affliction, must have been supported and comforted by habitual belief in those truths which it is the aim of the Church to inculcate."

---

[1] Vol. ii. p. 179.; vol. v. p. 62.

[2] Vol. v. p. 1.

[3] MSS. I. F.

Loughrigg Tarn. — "This beautiful pool, and the surrounding scene, are minutely described in my little Book on the Lakes."[1]

"Sir G. B., in the earlier part of his life, was induced, by his love of nature and the art of painting, to take up his abode at Old Brathay, about three miles from this spot, so that he must have seen it under many aspects; and he was so much pleased with it, that he purchased the Tarn with a view to build such a residence as is alluded to in this 'Epistle.' The project of building was given up, Sir G. B. retaining possession of the Tarn. Many years afterwards, a Kendal tradesman, born upon its banks, applied to me for the purchase of it, and, accordingly, it was sold for the sum that had been given for it, and the money was laid out, under my direction, upon a substantial oak fence for a certain number of yew-trees, to be planted in Grasmere Churchyard. Two were planted in each enclosure, with a view to remove, after a certain time, the one which throve the least. After several years, the stouter plant being left, the others were taken up, and placed in other parts of the same churchyard, and were adequately fenced at the expence and under the care of the late Mr. Barber, Mr. Greenwood, and myself. The whole eight are now thriving, and are an ornament to a place which, during late years, has lost much of its rustic simplicity by the introduction of iron palisades, to fence off family burying-grounds, and by numerous monuments, some of them in very bad taste, from which this place of burial was in my memory quite free: see the lines in the sixth book of 'The Excursion,' beginning,

---

[1] Page 24. edit. 1823.

'*Green is the Church-yard.*'

"The 'Epistle,' to which these notes refer, though written so far back as 1811, was carefully revised so late as 1842, previous to its publication. I am loath to add, that it was never seen by the person to whom it is addressed. So sensible am I of the deficiencies in all that I write, and so far does every thing that I attempt fall short of what I wish it to be, that even private publication, if such a term may be allowed, requires more resolution than I can command. I have written to give vent to my own mind, and not without hope that, some time or other, kindred minds might benefit by my labours; but I am inclined to believe I should never have ventured to send forth any verses of mine to the world, if it had not been done on the pressure of personal occasions. Had I been a rich man, my productions, like this 'Epistle,' the 'Tragedy of the Borderers,' &c., would most likely have been confined to MS."

So far Mr. Wordsworth. But, to return to the subject of the "Epistle."

The progress of the party on what the Poet calls their "gipsy travel," from their cottage-home to their place of destination, is the subject of this "Epistle," which makes a very picturesque chapter in the history of his domestic life. The wain appears standing at his cottage-door, early in the morning, to be "freighted thoughtfully with a various store;" the servant-girl, "lightsome Fanny," is the blooming lass seated as charioteer upon it, — a pleasing feature in the picture, showing how much affectionate freedom, blended with respect, subsisted in the intercourse between the servants of the household and the master; and then, near her, in the vehicle, the two children,

> "Those infants dear,
> A pair who smilingly sat, side by side,
> Our hope confirming, that the salt sea-side,
> Whose free embraces we were bound to seek,
> Would their lost strength restore, and freshen the pale cheek."

Then, to complete the picture, the Poet and his wife, something in patriarchal guise (as he himself says), follow in the rear of the caravan, as it moves slowly up the hill, from the Vale of Grasmere, towards Red Bank and Loughrigg Tarn. Full of expectation they were of the good effects of the sea-breezes and sea-bathing:

> "Such hope did either parent entertain,
> Pacing behind, along the silent lane."

A beautiful domestic landscape, worthy of the pencil of Gainsborough!

We may not pause here, to look at the other objects in the picture, — the curate's[1] dog, his old and faithful Argus; Loughrigg Tarn; the salutation from the hill; the hay-making in Yewdale; the arrival at the Grange; the breakfast-table prepared; the cottage-comforts; and the kind and joyous looks of the fair hostess.

---

[1] The Rev. Mr. Rowlandson, fifty years curate of Grasmere.

But, alas! this hopeful journey was soon followed by sadness:

> "Soon did the Almighty Giver of all rest
> Take those dear young ones to a fearless nest."[1]

Soon, too soon, was the Poet constrained to address her in sorrow, who had walked by his side in hope:

> "In trellised shed with clustering roses gay,
> And, MARY! oft beside our blazing fire,
> When years of wedded life were as a day
> Whose current answers to the heart's desire,
> Did we together read in Spenser's lay,
> How Una, sad of soul, — in sad attire,
> The gentle Una, of celestial birth,
> To seek her knight went wandering o'er the earth.
>
> . . . . .
>
> Notes could we hear, as of a faery shell
> Attuned to words with sacred wisdom fraught; . . .
> Till, in the bosom of our rustic cell,
> We by a lamentable change were taught
> That 'bliss with mortal man may not abide,' —
> How nearly joy and sorrow are allied."[2]

In the affecting poem, entitled "Maternal Grief,"[3] such sensations as thrilled through the heart of these two loving and beloved children, are most feelingly portrayed.

In the next summer, one of them, Catharine, was suddenly removed by death. "In the morning it is green, and groweth up, but in the evening it is cut down, dried up, and withered." Such were the words uttered by one of her brothers, on the previous day, quite unconsciously, and without any reference to his sister, and in a few hours, 4th June, 1812, they were verified in her. She was buried in Grasmere Churchyard. "Suffer the little children to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of God," is inscribed on her tomb. The feelings of her father at this sad loss are expressed in one of his sonnets.[1] Suggestions of comfort are presented to his mind in another poem.[2] The other of the two children, her brother Thomas, appeared to be restored to health; he was a boy of much promise, dutiful, regular, methodical, affectionate. His pleasure was to go to Grasmere Churchyard, and sweep the leaves from his sister's grave; but he, too, was unexpectedly taken away. He was attacked by the measles, but seemed to be recovering from them when he was seized by a cough and inflammation, and died on December 1st, 1812. They both now lie side by side in Grasmere Churchyard.

---

[1] Vol. v. p. 9.
[2] Dedication of White Doe, vol. iv. p. 1.
[3] Vol. i. p. 236.

"Six months to six years added he remained
Upon this sinful earth, by sin unstained.
O blessed Lord! whose mercy then removed
A child whom every eye that looked on loved,
Support us! teach us calmly to resign
What we possessed, and now is wholly thine."[3]

Such are the lines inscribed by the Poet's hand on his child's grave.

---

[1] Vol. ii. p. 273., "Surprised by Joy," &c.
[2] Vol. ii. p. 291., "Desponding Father."
[3] Vol. v. p. 121.

There is a beautiful letter from Mr. Southey's pen in his correspondence[1] on this and other like bereavements.

Nearly twenty-four years passed away before death came again to his house. In 1836 (January 1st) Sarah Hutchinson, his wife's sister, dear to him as an own sister, was taken away, and carried to the same churchyard. His beloved daughter followed in 1847 (July 9th), and now he himself is gathered to the same place.

---

[1] Vol. iv. p. 13.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

CONVENTION OF CINTRA.

It has already been mentioned, that in 1807, Wordsworth's family had become too numerous to be contained in the cottage, which had, up to that time, been his abode in Grasmere. When, therefore, they returned from Coleorton, he looked around for another abode. A new house was just rising above the head of the lake, and to the north of it Allan Bank. Thither he migrated in the spring of 1808, and there he resided for three years.

This period does not appear to have been very prolific in poetry, — a circumstance which, perhaps, may be attributed, in some degree, to the great inconveniences of this new residence. The chimneys smoked; the rooms were hardly finished; the grounds were to be laid out; the workmen were still on the premises; there was little of the repose favourable to the Muses. But, on the other hand, the time of this sojourn at Allan Bank was rendered memorable by the production of two works in prose, by two Poets: the " Essay on the Convention of Cintra," by Wordsworth, and " The Friend," [1] by Coleridge, who *dictated* it (for he did not write it with his own hand) under Wordsworth's roof. The first number appeared June 1st, 1809; the last, March 25th, 1810.

---

[1] The title is as follows: "The Friend; A Literary, Moral, and Political Weekly Paper, excluding personal and party politics, and the events of the day. Conducted by S. T. Coleridge, of Grasmere, Westmoreland."

Much of Mr. Wordsworth's life was spent in comparative retirement, and a great part of his poetry concerns natural and quiet objects. But it would be a great error to imagine that he was not an attentive observer of public events. He was an ardent lover of his country, and of mankind. He watched the progress of civil affairs in England with a vigilant eye, and he brought the actions of public men to the test of the great and lasting principles of equity and truth. He extended his range of view to events in foreign parts, especially on the continent of Europe. Few persons, though actually engaged in the great struggle of that period, felt more deeply than Mr. Wordsworth did in his peaceful retreat, for the calamities of European nations suffering at that time from the imbecility of their governments, and from the withering oppression of a prosperous despotism. His heart burned within him when he looked forth upon the contest; and impassioned words proceeded from him, both in poetry and prose. The contemplative calmness of his position, and the depth and intensity of his feelings, combined together to give a dignity and clearness, a vigour and a splendour, and, consequently, a lasting value, to his writings on measures of domestic and foreign policy, qualities that rarely belong to contemporaneous political effusions produced by those engaged in the heat and din of the battle. This remark is specially applicable to his tract on the CONVENTION OF CINTRA:

"Not 'mid the world's vain objects that enslave
The free-born soul, — that world whose vaunted skill
In selfish interest perverts the will,
Whose factions lead astray the wise and brave, —
Not there, — but in dark wood, and rocky cave,
And hollow vale, —

Here, mighty Nature! in this school sublime
I weigh the hopes and fears of suffering Spain."[1]

The earnestness with which he watched the course of the peninsular war, was thus described in conversation by himself: "It would not be easy to conceive with what a depth of feeling I entered into the struggle carried on by the Spaniards for their deliverance from the usurped power of the French. Many times have I gone from Allan Bank in Grasmere Vale, where we were then residing, to the Raise-Gap, as it is called, so late as two o'clock in the morning, to meet the carrier bringing the newspaper from Keswick. Imperfect traces of the state of mind in which I then was may be found in my tract on the Convention of Cintra, as well as in the 'Sonnets dedicated to Liberty.'"[2]

The three following letters to Archdeacon Wrangham belong to this period; and the two latter may serve to give a sketch of the author's design in his work on the CONVENTION OF CINTRA, which was published at the end of May, 1809.[3]

---

[1] Vol. iii. p. 73.

[2] MSS. I. F.

[3] The title is as follows: "Concerning the relations of Great Britain, Spain, and Portugal, to each other, and to the common enemy, at this crisis; and specifically as affected by the Convention of Cintra. The whole brought to the test of those principles by which alone the independence and freedom of nations can be preserved or recovered.

Qui didicit patriæ quid debeat;
Quod sit conscripti, quod judicis officium; quæ
Partes in bellum missi ducis.

By WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

London: Printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, Paternoster Row, 1809."

The Appendix, a portion of the work which Mr. Wordsworth regarded as executed in a masterly manner, was drawn up by Mr. De Quincey, who revised the proofs of the whole.

Rev. Francis Wrangham, Hunmanby, near
Bridlington, Yorkshire.

" *Grasmere, Oct.* 2. 1808.

" My dear Wrangham,

. . . . . .

" In what are you employed — I mean by way of amusement and relaxation from your professional duties? Is there any topographical history of your neighbourhood? I remember reading White's Natural History and Antiquities of Selbourne with great pleasure, when a boy at school, and I have lately read Dr. Whitaker's History of Craven and Whalley, both with profit and pleasure. Would it not be worth your while to give some of your leisure hours to a work of this kind, making those works partly your model, and adding thereto from the originality of your own mind?

" With your activity you might produce something of this kind of general interest, taking for your limit any division in your neighbourhood, natural, ecclesiastical, or civil: suppose, for example, the coast from the borders of Cleveland, or from Scarborough, to Spurnhead; and inward into the country to any boundary that you might approve of. Pray think of this. I am induced to mention it from belief that you are admirably qualified for such a work; that it would pleasantly employ your leisure hours; and from a regret in seeing works of this kind, which might be made so very interesting, utterly marred by falling into the hands of wretched bunglers, *e. g.* the History of Cleveland, which I have just read, by a Clergyman of ——, the most heavy performance I ever encountered; and what an interesting district! Pray let me hear from you soon.

"Affectionately and sincerely yours,

"W. WORDSWORTH."

"*Grasmere, Dec.* 3. 1808.

"My dear Wrangham,

"On the other side you have the prospectus of a weekly essay intended to be published by your friend Coleridge.

. . . . . .

"Your Sermon did not reach me till the night before last; we have all read it, and are much pleased with it. Upon the whole, I like it better than the last: it must have been heard with great interest. I differ, however, from you in a few particulars. 1st. The Spaniards 'devoting themselves for an imprisoned Bourbon, or the crumbling relics of the Inquisition.' This is very fair for pointing a sentence, but it is not the truth. They have told us over and over again, that they are *fighting against a foreign tyrant*, who has dealt with them most perfidiously and inhumanly, who must hate them for their worth, and on account of the injuries they have received from him, and whom they must hate accordingly; *against* a ruler over whom they could have no control, and *for* one whom they have told us they will establish as a sovereign of a *free* people, and therefore must he himself be a limited monarch. You will permit me to make to you this representation for its truth's sake, and because it gives me an opportunity of letting out a secret, viz. that I myself am very deep in this subject, and about to publish upon it, first, I believe, in a newspaper, for the sake of immediate and wide circulation; and next, the same matter in a separate pamphlet, under the title of 'The Convention of Cintra brought to the test of principles, and the people of Great Britain vindicated from the charge of having prejudged it.' You will wonder to hear me talk of principles when I have told you that I also do not go along with you in your sentiments respecting the Roman Catholic question. I confess I am not prepared to see the Roman Catholic religion as the Established Church of Ireland; and how that can be consistently refused to them, if other things are granted on the plea of their being the majority, I do not see. Certainly this demand will follow, and how would it be answered?

"There is yet another circumstance in which I differ from you. If Dr. Bell's plan of education be of that importance which it appears to be of, it cannot be a matter of indifference whether he or Lancaster have a rightful claim to the invention. For Heaven's sake let all benefactors of their species have the honour due to them. Virgil gives a high place in Elysium to the improvers of life, and it is neither the least philosophical or least poetical passage of the Æneid.[1] These points of difference being stated, I may say that in other things I greatly approve both of the matter and manner of your Sermon.

"Do not fail to return my best thanks to the lady to whom I am obliged for the elegant and accurate drawing of Broughton Church. I should have written to thank her and you for it immediately, but I foresaw that I should have occasion to write to you on this or other business.

---

[1] "Quique sui memores alios fecere merendo."—*Æn.* vi. 664.

"All here desire their best remembrances; and believe me (in great haste, for I have several other letters to write on the same subject), affectionately yours,

"W. WORDSWORTH."

"*Workington, April* 3. 1809.

"My dear Wrangham,

"You will think I am afraid that I have used you ill in not replying sooner to your last letter; particularly as you were desirous to be informed in what newspaper my Pamphlet was printing. I should not have failed to give you immediately any information upon this subject which could be of use; but in fact, though I began to publish in a newspaper, viz. 'The Courier,' an accidental loss of two or three sheets of the manuscript prevented me from going on in that mode of publication after two sections had appeared. The Pamphlet will be out in less than a fortnight, entitled, at full length, 'Concerning the relations of Great Britain, Spain, and Portugal, to each other, and to the common enemy at this crisis, and specifically as affected by the Convention of Cintra; the whole brought to the test of those principles by which alone the independence and freedom of nations can be preserved or recovered.' This is less a Title than a Table of Contents. I give it you at full length in order that you may set your fancy at work (if you have no better employment for it) upon what the Pamphlet may contain. I sent off the last sheets only a day or two since, else I should have written to you sooner; it having been my intention to pay my debt to you the moment I had discharged this debt to my country. What I have written has been done according to the best light of my conscience: it is indeed very imperfect, and will, I fear, be little read; but if it is read, cannot, I hope, fail of doing some good; though I am aware it will create me a world of enemies, and call forth the old yell of Jacobinism. I have not sent it to any personal friends as such, therefore I have made no exception in your case. I have ordered it to be sent to two, the Spanish and Portuguese Ambassadors, and three or four other public men and Members of Parliament, but to nobody of my friends and relations. It is printed with my name, and, I believe, will be published by Longman. . . . I am very happy that you have not been inattentive to my suggestion on the subject of Topography. When I ventured to recommend the pursuit to you, I did not for a moment suppose that it was to interfere with your appropriate duties as a parish priest; far otherwise: but I know you are of an active mind, and I am sure that a portion of your time might be thus employed without any deduction from that which was due to your professional engagements. It would be a recreation to you; and also it does appear to me that records of this kind ought to be executed by somebody or other, both for the instruction of those now living and for the sake of posterity; and if so, the duty devolves more naturally upon clergymen than upon other persons, as their opportunities and qualifications are both likely to be better than those of other men. If you have not seen White's and Whitaker's books do procure a sight of them.

"I was aware that you would think me fair game upon the Roman Catholic question; but really I should be greatly obliged to any man who would help over the difficulty I stated. If the Roman Catho upon the plea of their being the majority ma (which implies an admission on our part that th profession of faith is in itself as good as ours consistent with civil liberty), if they are to h their requests accorded, how can they be refu (consistently) the further prayer of being constitu upon the same plea, the Established Church? confess I am not prepared for this. With the Meth dists on one side and the Catholics on the other, wh is to become of the poor church and the people England? to both of which I am most tenderly tached, and to the former not the less so, on acco of the pretty little spire of Broughton Parish Chur under which you and I were made happy men by gift from Providence of two excellent wives. Mrs. Wrangham present my cordial regards, and lieve me, dear Wrangham, your very

"sincere and affectionate friend,

"W. WORDSWORTH."

The following is to the Earl of Lonsdale.

To Lord Lonsdale.

"*Grasmere, May* 25. [1809.]

"My Lord,

. . . . . .

"I had also another reason for deferring this a knowledgment to your Lordship, viz. that at th same time I wished to present to you a Tract whic I have lately written, and which I hope you hav now received. It was finished, and ought to hav eared, two months ago, but has been delayed by umstances (connected with my distance from the ss) over which I had no control. If this Tract uld so far interest your Lordship as to induce to peruse it, I do not doubt that it will be ughtfully and candidly judged by you; in which e I fear no censure, but that which every man is le to who, with good intentions, may have occa- ally fallen into error; while at the same time I e an entire confidence that the principles which I e endeavoured to uphold must have the sanction a mind distinguished, like that of your Lordship, regard to morality and religion, and the true dig- y and honour of your country.

. . . . . .

" May I beg of your Lordship to present my re- ctful compliments to Lady Lonsdale.

" I have the honour to be,
" My Lord,
" Your Lordship's
" Most obedient servant,
" W. WORDSWORTH."

The following, written some years after to his friend they, may well find a place here.

" My dear Southey [1],

" Col. Campbell, our neighbour at G., has sent for r book; he served during the whole of the Penin- ar war, and you shall hear what he says of it in *course.* We are out of the way of all literary communication, so I can report nothing. I have read the whole with great pleasure; the work will do you everlasting honour. I have said *the whole*, forgetting, in that contemplation, my feelings upon one part, where you have tickled with a feather when you should have branded with a red-hot iron. You will guess I mean the Convention of Cintra. My detestation, I may say abhorrence, of that event is not at all diminished by your account of it. Buonaparte had committed a capital blunder in supposing that when he had *intimidated* the *Sovereigns* of Europe he had *conquered* the several *Nations*. Yet it was natural for a wiser than he was to have fallen into this mistake; for the old despotisms had deprived the body of the people of all practical knowledge in the management, and, of necessity, of all interest, in the course of affairs. The French themselves were astonished at the apathy and ignorance of the people whom they had supposed they had utterly subdued, when they had taken their fortresses, scattered their armies, entered their capital cities, and struck their cabinets with dismay. There was no hope for the deliverance of Europe till the nations had suffered enough to be driven to a passionate recollection of all that was honourable in their past history, and to make appeal to the principles of universal and everlasting justice. These sentiments, the authors of that Convention most unfeelingly violated; and as to the principles, they seemed to be as little aware even of the existence of such powers, for powers emphatically may they be called, as the tyrant himself. As far, therefore, as these men could, they put an extinguisher upon the star which was then rising. It is in vain to say that after the first burst of indignation was over, the Portuguese themselves were reconciled to the event, and rejoiced in their deliverance. We may infer from that the horror which they must have felt in the presence of their oppressors; and we may see in it to what a state of helplessness their bad government had reduced them. Our duty was to have treated them with respect as the representatives of suffering humanity beyond what they were likely to look for themselves, and as deserving greatly, in common with their Spanish brethren, for having been the first to rise against the tremendous oppression, and to show how, and how only, it could be put an end to.

---

[1] Mr. Southey's opinions on the Convention of Cintra, at the e of its ratification, were in unison with those of his friend. Southey's Correspondence, vol. iii. p. 177—180.

"WM. WORDSWORTH."

It will be remembered that in the year 1793, Mr. Wordsworth was much dejected, and that a shock was given to his moral being, when England declared war against France. In the work on the Convention of Cintra, he appears before the world as depressed in mind and indignant in spirit, because the war in the Peninsula was not carried on by England against France with sufficient vigour, and because, when it was, as he believed, in the power of England to have emancipated Spain and Portugal from French bondage, she allowed the enemy to escape by a retreat similar to a triumph.

Was he, therefore, inconsistent?

To this question let him reply in his own words:—

"The justice and necessity were by none more clearly perceived, or more feelingly bewailed, than by those who had most eagerly opposed the war in its commencement, and who continued most bitterly to regret that this nation had ever borne a part in it. Their conduct was herein consistent: they proved that they kept their eyes steadily fixed upon principles; for, though there was a shifting or transfer o hostility in their minds as far as regarded persons they only combated the same enemy opposed to them under a different shape; and that enemy was the spirit of selfish tyranny and lawless ambition."[1]

He then proceeds to show the difference between moral and physical force; and that an *army*, however well disciplined, is powerless against a *people* contending for its independence:—

"The power of *armies* is a visible thing,
Formal and circumscribed in time and space;
But who the limits of that power shall trace,
Which a brave *people* into light can bring,
Or hide at will, for freedom combating?"[2]

He thus expresses himself in the essay:—

"It is manifest that, though a great army may easily defeat or disperse another *army*, less or greater, yet it is not in a like degree formidable to a determined *people*, nor efficient in a like degree to subdue them, or to keep them in subjugation — much less i this people, like those of Spain in the present instance be numerous, and, like them, inhabit a territory extensive and strong by nature. For a great army, and even several great armies, cannot accomplish this by marching about the country, unbroken, but each must split itself into many portions, and the several detachments become weak accordingly, not merely as they are small in size, but because the soldiery, acting thus, necessarily relinquish much of that part of their superiority which lies in what may be called the enginery of war; and far more, because they lose, in proportion as they are broken, the power of profiting by the military skill of the commanders, or by their own military habits. The experienced soldier is thus brought down nearer to the plain ground of the inexperienced, man to the level of man: and it is then, that the truly brave man rises, the man of good hopes and purposes; and superiority in moral brings with it superiority in physical power."[1]

---

[1] Convention of Cintra, p. 6.

[2] Vol. iii. p. 86.

He proceeds to recapitulate the indignities suffered by Portugal and Spain from French tyranny and French *protection*[2], and then to educe reasons for hope from the spirit with which these indignities were encountered.[3] He next details the facts of the case: that the "struggle in the Peninsula (in the language of the British generals themselves) was for all that is dear to man[4];" that yet the French general Junot was recognised by them under his usurped title, Duke d'Abrantes[5], which was a badge of Spanish bondage; and that, when circumstances seemed to be most favourable to the cause for which the British army had been sent to Spain, a convention was signed, by which all the advantages of the crisis were forfeited, and the foes of England, whom she came to repel, treated with more consideration than her allies, whom she came to defend.[6] He then describes, in very vivid language, the feelings with which the tidings of this convention were received in England[7] — feelings of sorrow, astonishment, indignation, and shame, which were greatly aggravated when it was found that this convention was to be made an occasion of national rejoicing[1]; and the City of London had been rebuked for styling the convention "an afflicting event, humiliating and degrading to the country, and injurious to His Majesty's allies;"[2] and that France was glorying in the convention as a treaty dictated by herself.[3]

---

[1] Convention of Cintra, p. 14.

[2] Ibid. p. 25—34.

[3] Ibid. p. 34—43.

[4] Ibid. p 45.

[5] Ibid. p. 46.

[6] Ibid. p. 50. 75—89.

[7] Ibid. p. 95.

He speaks as the interpreter of those feelings:—

"In following the stream of these thoughts, I have not wandered from my course: I have drawn out to open day the truth from its recesses in the minds of my countrymen. Something more perhaps may have been done: a shape hath perhaps been given to that which was before a stirring spirit. I have shown in what manner it was their wish that the struggle with the adversary of all that is good should be maintained—by pure passions and high actions. They forbid that their noble aim should be frustrated by measuring against each other things which are incommensurate—mechanic against moral power—body against soul. They will not suffer, without expressing their sorrow, that purblind calculation should wither the purest hopes in the face of all-seeing justice. These are times of strong appeal—of deep-searching visitation; when the best abstractions of the prudential understanding give way, and are included and absorbed in a supreme comprehensiveness of intellect and passion; which is the perfection and the very being of humanity.

"How base! how puny! how inefficient for all good purposes are the tools and implements of policy, compared with these mighty engines of Nature!—There is no middle course: two masters cannot be served:—Justice must either be enthroned above might, and the moral law take place of the edicts of selfish passion; or the heart of the people, which alone can sustain the efforts of the people, will languish: their desires will not spread beyond the plough and the loom, the field and the fireside: the sword will appear to them an emblem of no promise; an instrument of no hope; an object of indifference, of disgust, or fear. Was there ever — since the earliest actions of men which have been transmitted by affectionate tradition, or recorded by faithful history, or sung to the impassioned harp of poetry — was there ever a people who presented themselves to the reason and the imagination, as under more holy influences than the dwellers upon the Southern Peninsula; as roused more instantaneously from a deadly sleep to a more hopeful wakefulness; as a mass fluctuating with one motion under the breath of a mightier wind; as breaking themselves up, and settling into several bodies, in more harmonious order; as reunited and embattled under a standard which was reared to the sun with more authentic assurance of final victory?"[1]

---

[1] Convention of Cintra, p. 95—97.

[2] Ibid. p. 100.

[3] Ibid. p. 108.

"Let the fire, which is never wholly to be extinguished, break out afresh; let but the human creature be roused; whether he have lain heedless and torpid in religious or civil slavery — have languished under a thraldom, domestic or foreign, or under both these alternately—or have drifted about a helpless member of a clan of disjointed and feeble barbarians,—let him rise and act;—and his domineering imagination, by which from childhood he has been betrayed, and the debasing affections, which it has imposed upon him, will from that moment participate the dignity of th newly ennobled being whom they will now acknowledge for their master; and will further him in hi progress, whatever be the object at which he aims Still more inevitable and momentous are the results when the individual knows that the fire, which i reanimated in him, is not less lively in the breasts o his associates; and sees the signs and testimonies o his own power, incorporated with those of a growing multitude, and not to be distinguished from them, accompany him wherever he moves. Hence those marvellous achievements which were performed by the first enthusiastic followers of Mohammed; and by other conquerors, who with their armies have swept large portions of the earth like a transitory wind, or have founded new religions or empires. But, if the object contended for be worthy and truly great (as, in the instance of the Spaniards, we have seen that it is); if cruelties have been committed upon an ancient and venerable people, which 'shake the human frame with horror;' if not alone the life which is sustained by the bread of the mouth, but that — without which there is no life — the life in the soul, has been directly and mortally warred against; if reason has had abominations to endure in her inmost sanctuary; — then does intense passion, consecrated by a sudden revelation of justice, give birth to those higher and better wonders which I have described; and exhibit true miracles to the eyes of men, and the noblest which can be seen. It may be added that, — as this union brings back to the right road the faculty of imagination, where it is prone to err, and has gone furthest astray; as it corrects those qualities which are in their essence indifferent, and cleanses those affections which (not being inherent in the constitution of man, nor necessarily determined to their object), are more immediately dependent upon the imagination, and which may have received from it a thorough taint of dishonour; — so the domestic loves and sanctities which are in their nature less liable to be stained, — so these, wherever they have flowed with a pure and placid stream, do instantly, under the same influence, put forth their strength as in a flood; and, without being sullied or polluted, pursue — exultingly and with song — a course which leads the contemplative reason to the ocean of eternal love."[1]

---

[1] Convention of Cintra, p. 112.

These passages may serve as specimens of the spirit and style of this noble Essay. Whatever difference of opinion may prevail concerning the relevance of the great principles enunciated in it to the question at issue, but one judgment can exist with respect to the importance of these principles, and the vigorous and fervid eloquence with which they are enforced. If Mr. Wordsworth had never written a single verse, this Essay alone would be sufficient to place him in the highest rank of English poets.

A few more extracts may be made, especially as the work itself is now very rare.

Speaking of the condition of the Peninsula before the Convention, and the infatuated policy of Napoleon[2]

---

[1] Convention of Cintra, p. 116.

[2] "An accursed thing it is to gaze
On prosperous tyrants with a dazzled eye;"—

and to

"Forget thy weakness upon which is built,
O wretched man, the throne of tyranny."*

---

* Vol. iii. p. 86.

(the sources of whose power are eloquently point out in another passage[1]), he says:—

“Reflect upon what was the temper and conditi of the Southern Peninsula of Europe — the nob temper of the people of this mighty island, sovereig of the all-embracing ocean; think also of the co dition of so vast a region in the Western contine and its islands; and we shall have cause to fear th ages may pass away before a conjunction of things, marvellously adapted to ensure prosperity to virtu shall present itself again. It could scarcely be spok of as being to the wishes of men,—it was so f beyond their hopes. The government which had bee exercised under the name of the old Monarchy Spain — this government, imbecile even to dotag whose very selfishness was destitute of vigour, had bee removed; taken laboriously and foolishly by the plo ting Corsican to his own bosom; in order that th world might see, more triumphantly set forth tha since the beginning of things had ever been see before, to what degree a man of bad principles despicable—though of great power—working blindl against his own purposes. It was a high satisfactio to behold demonstrated, in this manner, to what narrow domain of knowledge the intellect of a Tyra must be confined; that, if the gate by which wisdo enters has never been opened, that of policy wi surely find moments when it will shut itself again its pretended master imperiously and obstinately. To the eyes of the very peasant in the field, this sublime truth was laid open — not only that a Tyrant's domain of knowledge is narrow, but melancholy as narrow; inasmuch as — from all that is lovely, dignified, or exhilarating in the prospect of human nature — he is inexorably cut off; and therefore he is inwardly helpless and forlorn."[1]

---

[1] Convention of Cintra, p. 145. There is a remarkable sim larity between Mr. Wordsworth's observations on this subject, a those of Bishop Horsley, at the close of his sermon (xxix. Dan. iv. 17.), preached in St. Asaph Cathedral, on Dec. 5. 180 the day of public thanksgiving for the Victory of Trafalgar.

The following, as describing his own position in regard to public measures, will be read with interest:

"The evidence to which I have made appeal, in order to establish the truth, is not locked up in cabinets; but is accessible to all; as it exists in the bosoms of men — in the appearances and intercourse of daily life — in the details of passing events — and in general history. And more especially is its right import within the reach of him who — taking no part in public measures, and having no concern in the changes of things but as they affect what is most precious in his country and humanity — will doubtless be more alive to those genuine sensations which are the materials of sound judgment. Nor is it to be overlooked that such a man may have more leisure (and probably will have a stronger inclination) to communicate with the records of past ages."[2]

"I shall at present content myself with noting, that the basis of French tyranny is not laid in any superiority of talents in the Ruler, but in his utter rejection of the restraints of morality — in wickedness which acknowledges no limit but the extent of its own power. Let any one reflect a moment; and he will feel that a new world of forces is opened to a being who has made this desperate leap. It is a tremendous principle to be adopted, and steadily adhered to, by a man in the station which Buonaparte occupies; and he has taken the full benefit of it."[1]

---

[1] Convention of Cintra, p. 121, 122.

[2] Ibid. p. 131.

"No doubt in the command of almost the whole military force of Europe (the subject which called upon me to make these distinctions), he has, *at this moment*, a third source of power which may be added to these two."[2]

He then enumerates the circumstances which disqualify[3] statesmen — as they have generally been found to be in modern times — from taking large and elevated views of great questions, and from encountering great emergencies.

The *idola curiæ* exercise a tyranny over their understandings, and paralyse their powers: petty measures and puny men are the consequence. The remarks which he there makes may be studied with advantage by all who are engaged in public life.

He then interposes a warning against too much complacency and confidence in mechanical skill and power, and too sanguine expectations of national progress and elevation from material discoveries and improvements. These, he observes, may coexist with national decline, degradation, and debasement.

"In many parts of Europe (and especially in our own country) men have been pressing forward, for

---

[1] Convention of Cintra, p. 145. [2] Ibid. p. 146.

[3] "O'erweening statesmen have full long relied
On fleets and armies and external wealth;
But from *within* proceeds a nation's health."[*]

---

[*] Vol. iii. p. 84.

some time, in a path which has betrayed by its fruitfulness; furnishing them constant employment for picking up things about their feet, when thoughts were perishing in their minds. While Mechanic Arts, Manufactures, Agriculture, Commerce, and all those products of knowledge which are confined to gross, definite, and tangible objects, have, with the aid of Experimental Philosophy, been every day putting on more brilliant colours; the splendour of the Imagination has been fading: Sensibility, which was formerly a generous nursling of rude Nature, has been chased from its ancient range in the wide domain of patriotism and religion with the weapons of derision by a shadow calling itself Good Sense: calculations of presumptuous Expediency — groping its way among partial and temporary consequences — have been substituted for the dictates of paramount and infallible Conscience, the supreme embracer of consequences: lifeless and circumspect Decencies have banished the graceful negligence and unsuspicious dignity of Virtue.

"The progress of these arts also, by furnishing such attractive stores of outward accommodation, has misled the higher orders of society in their more disinterested exertions for the service of the lower. Animal comforts have been rejoiced over, as if they were the end of being. A neater and more fertile garden; a greener field; implements and utensils more apt; a dwelling more commodious and better furnished; — let these be attained, say the actively benevolent, and we are sure not only of being in the right road, but of having successfully terminated our journey. Now a country may advance, for some time, in this course with apparent profit: these accommo-

dations, by zealous encouragement, may
and still the Peasant or Artisan, their
slave in mind, a slave rendered even mor
the very tenure under which these po
held; and, if they veil from us this fact,
us to it, they are worse than worthless.
of emotion may be relaxed or destroyed
he may have little thought of the past
terest in the future. The great end an
life for men of all classes, and especial
those who live by manual labour, is a
with innocent and laudable animation
alone is the life of Man sustained;
alone is he warmed; — but by the
inmate of the breast, which at once
cherishes; by self-support and se
vours; by anticipations, apprehe
remembrances; by elasticity unc
resistance to injury; by joy, an
which his imagination gathers
tience, because life wants not pr
by gratitude, which — debasin
low-being is its object — habit
his elevation, in complacency

With this paragraph we
been quoted to show that
tion of Cintra was not an
tined to vanish with the
If this were the case
almost abortive.
the discharge of
for the perma

a view to any immediate results. He foresaw and predicted that his words would be to the public ear what midnight storms are to men who sleep.

> "I dropped my pen, and listened to the wind
> That sang of trees uptorn and vessels tost —
> A midnight harmony, and wholly lost
> To the general sense of men by chains confined
> Of business, care, or pleasure, or resigned
> To timely sleep. Thought I, the impassioned strain,
> Which without aid of numbers I sustain,
> Like acceptation from the world will find."[1]

It is true that some few readers it had on its first appearance; and it is recorded by an ear-witness that Mr. Canning said of this pamphlet that he considered it the most eloquent production since the days of Burke[2]; but, by some untoward delays in the printing, it was not published till the interest in the question under discussion had almost subsided. Certain it is, that an edition, consisting only of 500 copies, was not sold off; that many copies were disposed of by the publishers as waste paper, and went to the trunkmakers; and now there is scarcely any volume published in this century which is so difficult to be met with as the Tract on the Convention of Cintra; and if it were now reprinted, it would come before the public with almost the unimpaired freshness of a new work.

In connection with the Convention of Cintra, I may introduce an unpublished Letter[3], from Mr.

---

[1] Vol. iii. p. 73.

[2] Southey's Life and Correspondence, vol. iii. p. 180.; Gent. Mag. for June 1850, p. 617.

[3] I may be permitted to record Sir Charles Pasley's opinion on his letter, for which I am indebted to him. "The letter on my

Wordsworth to Captain Pasley, of Royal Engi now Major-General Sir Chas. W. Pasley, K.C.B. acknowledgment of his valuable Essay on the 'M tary Policy and Institutions of the British Empi

To Captain Pasley, Royal Engineers.

"*Grasmere, March* 28, 18

"My dear Sir,

"I address this to the publishers of your 'Es not knowing where to find you. Before I speak the instruction and pleasure which I have deri from your work, let me say a word or two in apo for my own apparent *neglect* of the letter with whi you honoured me some time ago. In fact, I w thoroughly sensible of the value of your corresp ence, and of your kindness in writing to me, and to up the pen to tell you so. I wrote half of a pre long letter to you, but I was so disgusted with t imperfect and feeble expression which I had given some not uninteresting ideas, that I threw away unfinished sheet, and could not find resolution

---

'Military Policy' is particularly interesting . . . Though Mr agreed that we ought to step forward with all our military as principals in the war, he objected to any increase of our power and resources by continental conquest, in which I now t he was quite right. I am not, however, by any means shak the opinion then advanced, that peace with Napoleon would to the loss of our naval superiority, and of our national indep ence, ... and I fully believe that the Duke of Wellington's paigns in the Spanish Peninsula saved the nation, though n credit is due to the ministry of that day for not despairi eventual success, but supporting him under all difficulties in of temporary reverses, and in opposition to a powerful part to influential writers."

resume what had been so inauspiciously begun. I am ashamed to say, that I write so few letters, and employ my pen so little in any way, that I feel both a lack of words (such words I mean as I wish for) and of mechanical skill, extremely discouraging to me. I do not plead these disabilities on my part as an excuse, but I wish you to know that they have been the sole cause of my silence, and not a want of sense of the honour done me by your correspondence, or an ignorance of what good breeding required of me. But enough of my trespasses! Let me only add, that I addressed a letter of some length to you when you were lying ill at Middleburgh; this probably you never received. Now for your book. I had expected it with great impatience, and desired a friend to send it down to me immediately on its appearance, which he neglected to do. On this account, I did not see it till a few days ago. I have read it through twice, with great care, and many parts three or four times over. From this, you will conclude that I must have been much interested; and I assure you that I deem myself also in a high degree instructed. It would be a most pleasing employment to me to dwell, in this letter, upon those points in which I agree with you, and to acknowledge my obligations for the clearer views you have given of truths which I before perceived, though not with that distinctness in which they now stand before my eyes. But I could wish this letter to be of some use to you; and that end is more likely to be attained if I advert to those points in which I think you are mistaken. These are chiefly such as though very material in themselves, are not at all so to the main object you have in view, viz. that of proving that the military power of France may by us be successfully resisted, and even overthrown. In the first place, then, I think that there are great errors in the survey of the comparative strength of the two empires, with which you begin your book, and on which the first 160 pages are chiefly employed. You seem to wish to frighten the people into exertion; and in your ardour to attain your object, that of rousing our countrymen by any means, I think you have caught far too eagerly at every circumstance with respect to revenue, navy, &c. that appears to make for the French. This I think was unnecessary. The people are convinced that the power of France is dangerous, and that it is our duty to resist it to the utmost. I think you might have commenced from this acknowledged fact; and, at all events, I cannot help saying, that the first 100 pages or so of your book, contrasted with the brilliant prospects towards the conclusion, have impressed me with a notion that you have written too much under the influence of feelings similar to those of a poet or novelist, who deepens the distress in the earlier part of his work, in order that the happy catastrophe which he has prepared for his hero and heroine may be more keenly relished. Your object is to conduct us to Elysium, and, lest we should not be able to enjoy that pure air and purpurial sunshine, you have taken a peep at Tartarus on the road. Now I am of your mind, that we ought not to make peace with France, on any account, till she is humiliated, and her power brought within reasonable bounds. It is our duty and our interest to be at war with her; but I do not think with you, that a state of peace would give to France that superiority which you seem so clearly to foresee. In estimating the resources of the two empires, as to revenue, you appear to make little or no allowance for what I deem of prime and paramount importance, the characters of the two nations, and of the two governments. Was there ever an instance, since the world began, of the peaceful arts thriving under a despotism so oppressive as that of France is and must continue to be, and among a people so unsettled, so depraved, and so undisciplined in civil arts and habits as the French nation must now be? It is difficult to come at the real revenue of the French empire; but it appears to me certain, absolutely certain, that it must diminish rapidly every year. The armies have hitherto been maintained chiefly from the contributions raised upon the conquered countries, and from the plunder which the soldiers have been able to find. But that harvest is over. Austria, and particularly Hungary, may have yet something to supply; but the French Ruler will scarcely quarrel with them for a few years at least. But from Denmark, and Sweden, and Russia, there is not much to be gained. In the mean while, wherever his iron yoke is fixed, the spirits of the people are broken; and it is in vain to attempt to extort money which they do not possess, and cannot procure. Their bodies he may command, but their bodies he cannot move without the inspiration of *wealth*, somewhere or other; by wealth I mean superfluous produce, something arising from the labour of the inhabitants of countries beyond what is necessary to their support. What will avail him the command of the whole population of the Continent, unless there be a security for capital somewhere existing, so that the mechanic arts and inventions may thereby be applied in such a manner as that an overplus may arise from the labour of the country which shall find its way into the pocket of the state for the purpose of supporting its military and civil establishments? Now, when I look at the condition of our country, and compare it with that of France, and reflect upon the length of the time, and the infinite combination of favourable circumstances which have been necessary to produce the laws, the regulations, the customs, the moral character, and the physical enginery of all sorts, through means, and by aid of which, labour is carried on in this happy land; and when I think of the wealth and population (concentrated too in so small a space) which we must have at command for military purposes, I confess I have not much dread, looking either at war or peace, of any power which France, with respect to us, is likely to attain for years, I may say for generations. Whatever may be the form of a government, its spirit, at least, must be mild and free before agriculture, trade, commerce, and manufactures can thrive under it; and if these do not prosper in a state, it may extend its empire to right and to left, and it will only carry poverty and desolation along with it, without being itself permanently enriched. You seem to take for granted, that because the French revenue amounts to so much at present it must continue to keep up to that height. This, I conceive impossible, unless the spirit of the government alters, which is not likely for many years. How comes it that we are enabled to keep, by sea and land, so many men in arms? Not by our foreign commerce, but by our domestic ingenuity, by our home labour, which, with the aid of capital and the mechanic arts and establishments, has enabled a few to produce so much as will maintain themselves, and the hundreds of thousands of their countrymen whom they support in arms. If our foreign trade were utterly destroyed, I am told, that not more than one sixth of our trade would perish. The spirit of Buonaparte's government is, and must continue to be, like that of the first conquerors of the New World who went raving about for gold — gold! and for whose rapacious appetites the slow but mighty and sure returns of any other produce could have no charms. I cannot but think that generations must pass away before France, or any of the countries under its thraldom, can attain those habits, and that character, and those establishments which must be attained before it can wield its population in a manner that will ensure our overthrow. This (if we conduct the war upon principles of common sense) seems to me impossible, while we continue at war; and should a peace take place (which, however, I passionately deprecate), France will long be compelled to pay tribute to us, on account of our being so far before her in the race of genuine practical philosophy and true liberty. I mean that the *mind* of this country is so far before that of France, and that *that* mind has empowered the *hands* of the country to raise so much national wealth, that France must condescend to accept from us what she will be unable herself to produce. Is it likely that any of our manufacturing capitalists, in case of a peace, would trust themselves to an arbitrary government like that of France, which, without a moment's warning, might go to war with us and seize their persons and their property; nay, if they should be so foolish as to trust themselves to its discretion, would be base enough to pick a quarrel with us for the very purpose of a pretext to strip them of all they possessed? Or is it likely, if the native French manufacturers and traders were capable of rivalling us in point of skill, that any Frenchman would venture upon that ostentatious display of wealth which a large cotton-mill, for instance, requires, when he knows that by so doing he would only draw upon himself a glance of the greedy eye of government, soon to be followed by a squeeze from its rapacious hand? But I have dwelt too long upon this. The sum of what I think, by conversation, I could convince you of is, that your comparative estimate is erroneous, and materially so, inasmuch as it makes no allowance for the increasing superiority which a state, supposed to be independent and equitable in its dealings to its subjects, must have over an oppressive government; and none for the time which is necessary to give prosperity to peaceful arts, even if the government should improve. Our country has a mighty and daily growing forest of this sort of wealth; whereas, in France, the trees are not yet put into the ground. For my own part, I do not think it possible that France, with all her command of territory and coast, can outstrip us in naval power, unless she could previously, by her land power, cut us off from timber and naval stores, necessary for the building and equipment of our fleet. In that intellectual superiority which, as I have mentioned, we possess over her, we should find means to build as many ships as she could build, and also could procure sailors to man them. The same energy would furnish means for maintaining the men; and if they could be fed and maintained, they would surely be produced. Why then am I for *war* with France? 1st. Because I think our naval superiority may be more cheaply maintained, and more easily, by war than by peace; and because I think, that if the war were conducted upon those principles of martial policy which you so admirably and nobly enforce, united with (or rather bottomed upon) those notions of justice and right, and that knowledge of and reverence for the moral sentiments of mankind, which, in my Tract, I attempted to portray and illustrate, the tide of military success would immediately turn in our favour; and we should find no more difficulty in reducing the French power than Gustavus Adolphus did in reducing that of the German Empire in his day. And here let me express my zealous thanks for the spirit and beauty with which you have pursued, through all its details, the course of martial policy which you recommend. Too much praise cannot be given to this which is the great body of your work. I hope that it will not be lost upon your countrymen. But (as I said before) I rather wish to dwell upon those points in which I am dissatisfied with your 'Essay.' Let me then come at once to a fundamental principle. You maintain, that as the military power of France is in progress, ours must be so also, or we must perish. In this I agree with you. Yet you contend also, that this increase or progress can only be brought about by conquests permanently established upon the Continent; and, calling in the doctrines of the writers upon the law of nations to your aid, you are for beginning with the conquest of Sicily, and so on, through Italy, Switzerland, &c. &c. Now it does not appear to me, though I should rejoice heartily to see a British army march from Calabria, triumphantly, to the heart of the Alps, and from Holland to the centre of Germany,—yet it does not appear to me that the conquest and permanent possession of these countries is necessary either to produce those resources of men or money which the security and prosperity of our country requires. All that is absolutely needful, for either the one or the other, is a large, experienced, and seasoned *army*, which we cannot possess without a field to fight in, and that field must be somewhere upon the Continent. Therefore, as far as concerns ourselves and our security, I do not think that so wide a space of conquered country is desirable; and, as a patriot, I have no wish for it. If I desire it, it is not for our sakes directly, but for the benefit of those unhappy nations whom we should rescue, and whose prosperity would be reflected back upon ourselves. Holding these notions, it is natural, highly as I rate the importance of military power, and deeply as I feel its necessity for the protection of every excellence and virtue, that I should rest my hopes with respect to the emancipation of Europe more upon moral influence, and the wishes and opinions of the people of the respective nations, than you appear to do. As I have written in my pamphlet, 'on the moral qualities of a people must its salvation ultimately depend. Something higher than military excellence must be taught *as* higher; something more fundamental, *as* more fundamental.' Adopting the opinion of the writers upon the laws of nations, you treat of *conquest* as if *conquest* could in itself, nakedly and abstractedly considered, confer rights. If we once admit this proposition, all morality is driven out of the world. We conquer Italy — that is, we raise the British standard in Italy,—and, by the aid of the inhabitants, we expel the French from the ry, and have a right to keep it for ourselves.

This, if I am not mistaken, is not only implied, but explicitly maintained in your book. Undoubtedly, if it be clear that the possession of Italy is necessary for our security, we have a right to keep possession of it, if we should ever be able to master it by the sword. But not because we have gained it by conquest, therefore may we keep it; no; the sword, as the sword, can give no rights; but because a great and noble nation, like ours, cannot prosper or exist without such possession. If the fact *were* so, we should then have a right to keep possession of what by our valour we had acquired — not otherwise. If these things were matter of mere speculation, they would not be worth talking about; but they are not so. The spirit of conquest, and the ambition of the sword, never can confer true glory and happiness upon a nation that has attained power sufficient to protect itself. Your favourites, the Romans, though no doubt having the fear of the Carthaginians before their eyes, yet were impelled to carry their arms out of Italy by ambition far more than by a rational apprehension of the danger of their condition. And how did they enter upon their career? By an act of atrocious injustice. You are too well read in history for me to remind you what that act was. The same disregard of morality followed too closely their steps everywhere. Their ruling passion, and sole steady guide, was the glory of the Roman name, and the wish to spread the Roman power. No wonder, then, if their armies and military leaders, as soon as they had destroyed all foreign enemies from whom anything was to be dreaded, turned their swords upon each other. The ferocious cruelties of Sylla and Marius, of Catiline, and of Antony and Octavius, and the despotism of the empire, were the necessary consequences of a long course of action pursued upon such blind and selfish principles. Therefore, admiring as I do your scheme of martial policy, and agreeing with you that a British military power may, and that the *present* state of the world requires that it *ought* to be, predominant in Italy, and Germany, and Spain; yet still, I am afraid that you look with too much complacency upon conquest by British arms, and upon British military influence upon the Continent, for *its own sake.* Accordingly, you seem to regard Italy with more satisfaction than Spain. I mean you contemplate our possible exertions in Italy with more pleasure, merely because its dismembered state would probably keep it more under our sway — in other words, more at our mercy. Now, I think there is nothing more unfortunate for Europe than the condition of Germany and Italy in these respects. Could the barriers be dissolved which have divided the one nation into Neapolitans, Tuscans, Venetians, &c., and the other into Prussians, Hanoverians, &c., and could they once be taught to feel their strength, the French would be driven back into their own land immediately. I wish to see Spain, Italy, France, Germany, formed into independent nations; nor have I any desire to reduce the power of France further than may be necessary for that end. Woe be to that country whose military power is irresistible! I deprecate such an event for Great Britain scarcely less than for any other land. Scipio foresaw the evils with which Rome would be visited when no Carthage should be in existence for her to contend with. If a nation have nothing to oppose or to fear without, it cannot escape decay and concussion within. Universal triumph and absolute security soon betray a state into abandonment of that discipline, civil and military, by which its victories were secured. If the time should ever come when this island shall have no more formidable enemies by land than it has at this moment by sea, the extinction of all that it previously contained of good and great would soon follow. Indefinite progress, undoubtedly, there ought to be somewhere; but let that be in knowledge, in science, in civilization, in the increase of the numbers of the people, and in the augmentation of their virtue and happiness. But progress in conquest cannot be indefinite; and for that very reason, if for no other, it cannot be a fit object for the exertions of a people, I mean beyond certain limits, which, of course, will vary with circumstances. My prayer, as a patriot, is, that we may always have, somewhere or other, enemies capable of resisting us, and keeping us at arm's length. Do I, then, object that our arms shall be carried into every part of the Continent? No: such is the present condition of Europe, that I earnestly pray for what I deem would be a mighty blessing. France has already destroyed, in almost every part of the Continent, the detestable governments with which the nations have been afflicted; she has extinguished one sort of tyranny, but only to substitute another. Thus, then, have the countries of Europe been taught, that domestic oppression, if not manfully and zealously repelled, must sooner or later be succeeded by subjugation from without; they have tasted the bitterness of both cups, have drunk deeply of both. Their spirits are prepared for resistance to the foreign tyrant, and with our help I think they may shake him off, and, under our countenance, and following (as far as they are capable) our example, they may fashion to themselves, making use of what is best in their own ancient laws and institutions, new forms of government, which may secure posterity from a repetition of such calamities as the present age has brought forth. The materials of a new balance of power exist in the language, and name, and territory of Spain, in those of France, and those of Italy, Germany, Russia, and the British Isles. The smaller states must disappear, and merge in the large nations and wide-spread languages. The possibility of this remodelling of Europe I see clearly; earnestly do I pray for it; and I have in my mind a strong conviction that your invaluable work will be a powerful instrument in preparing the way for that happy issue. Yet, still, we must go deeper than the nature of your labour requires you to penetrate. Military policy merely will not perform all that is needful, nor mere military virtues. If the Roman state was saved from overthrow, by the attack of the slaves and of the gladiators, through the excellence of its armies, yet this was not without great difficulty[1]; and Rome would have been destroyed by Carthage, had she not been preserved by a civic fortitude in which she surpassed all the nations of the earth. The reception which the senate gave to Terentius Varro, after the battle of Cannæ, is the sublimest event in human history. What a contrast to the wretched conduct of the Austrian government after the battle at Wagram! England requires, as you have shown so eloquently and ably, a new system of martial policy; but England, as well as the rest of

---

[1] "Totis imperii viribus consurgitur," says the historian, speaking of the war of the gladiators.

Europe, requires what is more difficult to give it, — a new course of education, a higher tone of moral feeling, more of the grandeur of the imaginative faculties, and less of the petty processes of the unfeeling and purblind understanding, that would manage the concerns of nations in the same calculating spirit with which it would set about building a house. Now a state ought to be governed (at least in these times), the labours of the statesman ought to advance, upon calculations and from impulses similar to those which give motion to the hand of a great artist when he is preparing a picture, or of a mighty poet when he is determining the proportions and march of a poem; — much is to be done by rule; the great outline is previously to be conceived in distinctness, but the consummation of the work must be trusted to resources that are not tangible, though known to exist. Much as I admire the political sagacity displayed in your work, I respect you still more for the lofty spirit that supports it; for the animation and courage with which it is replete; for the contempt, in a just cause, of death and danger by which it is ennobled; for its heroic confidence in the valour of your countrymen; and the absolute determination which it everywhere expresses to maintain in all points the honour of the soldier's profession, and that of the noble nation of which you are a member — of the land in which you were born. No insults, no indignities, no vile stooping, will your politics admit of; and therefore, more than for any other cause, do I congratulate my country on the appearance of a book which, resting in this point our national safety upon the purity of our national character, will, I trust, lead naturally to make us, at the same time, a more powerful and highminded nation.

"Affectionately yours,
"W. WORDSWORTH."

The following was written by Mr. Wordsworth, in the year 1840, to his friend, Professor Reed, of Philadelphia:

"I am much pleased by what you say in your letter of the 18th of May last, upon the Tract of the 'Convention of Cintra,' and I think myself with some interest upon its being reprinted hereafter, along with my other writings. But the respect, which, in common with all the rest of the rational part of the world, I bear for the Duke of Wellington, will prevent my reprinting the pamphlet during his lifetime. It has not been in my power to read the volumes of his Despatches, which I hear so highly spoken of, but I am convinced that nothing they contain could alter my opinion of the injurious tendency of that, or any other convention, conducted upon such principles. It was, I repeat, gratifying to me that you should have spoken of that work as you do, and particularly that you should have considered it in relation to my poems, somewhat in the same manner you had done in respect to my little volume on the Lakes.

"I send you a sonnet, composed the other day, while I was climbing our mountain Helvellyn, upon Haydon's portrait of the Duke of Wellington, supposed to be on the field of Waterloo, twenty years after the battle:

'By Art's bold privilege, warrior, and war-horse stand
On ground yet strewn with their last battle's wreck;

the steed glory, while his master's hand
s, fixed for ages, on his conscious neck;
by the chieftain's look, though at his side
ngs that day's treasured sword, how firm a check
iven to triumph and all human pride!'"[1]

---

[1] Vol. ii. p. 311.

CHAPTER XXIX.

ADVICE TO THE YOUNG.

In the 17th Number of "The Friend," published on Dec. 14. 1809, is an interesting Letter to the Editor, from a correspondent who subscribes himself Mathetes, and who is generally understood to be a person eminent in the various departments of Poetry, Philosophy, and Criticism — Professor Wilson.

The writer begins with describing the danger to which a young man is exposed on emerging from a state of tutelage into the world. There are, he thinks, numerous causes conspiring to bring his mind into bondage to popular fallacies, which will impair its simplicity, its energy, and its love of truth. He is dazzled by the fame of those who occupy the highest places in the world; his affections attach him to them and their opinions; and, in a degenerate age, such as the writer affirms the present to be, the ardour and enthusiasm of youth is thus enlisted in the cause of what is often illusory and pernicious.

This danger, it is alleged, is increased by the common belief, that human nature is gradually advancing by a continuous progress towards perfection. The necessary consequence of this supposition is, a confident presumption that the opinions of the *present* time are wiser than those of the *past;* and an overweening reliance on contemporary judgment grows up with a contemptuous disregard for antiquity.

How are the young to be rescued from this perilous condition? Not, it is answered, by the voice of their own reason and affections, for they are already subjected to the dominion of false principles. It must be, by the warning voice of some contemporary teacher, who has won their respect by his intellectual powers, and has gained their affections by his ardent benevolence, and who will warn them against the delusions of the age, and instruct them to suspect, distrust, and analyze its opinions.

"If a Teacher," it is said, "should stand up in their generation conspicuous above the multitude in superior power, and yet more in the assertion and proclamation of disregarded truth, — to him, to his cheering and animating voice, all hearts would turn, whose deep sensibility has been oppressed by the indifference, or misled by the seduction of the times. Of one such teacher given to our own age, you have described the power when you say, that in his enunciation of truths he seems to speak in thunders.[1]

"I believe that mighty voice has not been poured out in vain; that there are hearts that have received into their inmost depths all its varying tones; and even now there are many to whom the name of Wordsworth calls up the recollection of their weakness and the consciousness of their strength."

Such was the appeal of "MATHETES." His letter was followed[2] by some observations from the pen of him whom he had invoked as his teacher, — W. Wordsworth.

---

[1] Coleridge in "The Friend," vol. i. p. 317. had said of Wordsworth, "quem quoties lego, non verba mihi videor audire, sed *tonitrua*."

[2] In Nos. 17. and 20.

He observes, that it is erroneous to imagine that there ever was an age in which objects did not exist to which even the wisest attached undue importance, and in which minds were not idolized that owed their influence to the frailty of their contemporaries rather than to their own strength. At all times young men have been exposed to injurious influences even from those persons whom they are bound to revere; and at all times, therefore, they have been in danger of delusion, frequent in proportion to the liveliness of their sensibility, and the strength of their imagination.

But we judge amiss both of the past and the present. In looking back on the past, we see certain prominent features, but we forget how much we do *not* see. Next, we weigh the *whole* past against the time present to *us*. Hence our comparison is fallacious, and our deductions from it erroneous.

Again, it may be quite true that *certain* minds, which have existed in past ages, such as Homer, Shakspeare, Bacon, Milton, Newton, may not be surpassed or equalled in the present time, yet it does not follow that the *general course* of human nature is not progressive. Nor are we to imagine, that, because we *do not see* progress continuously made, therefore it *does not take place.* There *is* progress in a *winding river*, as well as in a *straight road.* So it may be, so it probably is, with the human species.

Hence it follows, that the faith, which every generous mind would wish to cherish, in the advancement of society, ought not to dispose the young to an undue admiration of their own age, and so tend to degrade and enslave them.

The true protection against delusion is to be found in self-examination, and in independent exertion. Here youth has great advantages. Health, leisure, elasticity of spirit, hope, confidence, disinterestedness, these are some of its aids, which enable it to labour aright. And if we suppose youth to stand, as it does, in the *bivium* of Prodicus, it ought to put to itself certain searching questions, *What* are my own aims? *why* do I value my faculties and attainments? For any selfish advantage? or a nobler cause? Am I prepared to renounce applause, to forfeit wealth, to encounter toil, to disregard censure in the pursuit of virtue? Am I ready to do this *cheerfully?* If not, then I ought not to complain of any positive evil under which I labour from the circumstances of *youth;* but I ought to regret that *I am defective* in those courageous instincts which are the appropriate characteristics of *that* season of life.

What, however, can be gained by this admonition? He cannot recal the past; he cannot begin his journey afresh; he cannot untwist the chain of images and sentiments in his mind. "He may, notwithstanding," says Mr. Wordsworth, whose exact words I will now cite[1], "be remanded to nature; and with trustworthy hopes; founded less upon his sentient than upon his intellectual being — to nature, not as leading on insensibly to the society of reason; but to reason and will as leading back to the wisdom of nature. A reunion in this order accomplished, will bring reformation and timely support; and the two powers of reason and nature, thus reciprocally teacher and taught, may advance together in a track to which there is no limit.

---

[1] Friend, p. 310.

"We have been discoursing (by implication at least) of infancy, childhood, boyhood, and youth — of pleasures lying upon the unfolding intellect plenteously as morning dew-drops — of knowledge inhaled insensibly like a fragrance — of dispositions stealing into the spirit like music from unknown quarters — of images uncalled for and rising up like exhalations — of hopes plucked like beautiful wild-flowers from the ruined tombs that border the highways of antiquity to make a garland for a living forehead; in a word, we have been treating of nature as a teacher of truth through joy and through gladness, and as a creatress of the faculties by a process of smoothness and delight. We have made no mention of fear, shame, sorrow, nor of ungovernable and vexing thoughts; because, although these have been and have done mighty service, they are overlooked in that stage of life when youth is passing into manhood — overlooked, or forgotten. We now apply for succour which we need, to a faculty that works after a different course: that faculty is reason: she gives much spontaneously, but she seeks for more; she works by thought, through feeling; yet in thoughts she begins and ends."

He then proceeds to enlarge on the necessity of independent effort, and of an abiding sense of personal responsibility, as distinguished from and paramount to dependence on any living teacher, however eminent.[1]

"Surely, if the being of the individual be under his own care; if it be his first care; if duty begin from the point of accountableness to our conscience, and, through that, to God and human nature; if without such primary sense of duty, all secondary care of teacher, of friend, of parent, must be baseless and fruitless; if, lastly, the motions of the soul transcend in worth those of the animal functions, nay, give to them their sole value; then truly are there such powers: and the image of the dying taper may be recalled and contemplated, though with no sadness in the nerves, no disposition to tears, no unconquerable sighs, yet with a melancholy in the soul, a sinking inward into ourselves from thought to thought, a steady remonstrance and a high resolve. Let then the youth go back, as occasion will permit, to nature and solitude, thus admonished by reason, and relying upon this newly acquired support. A world of fresh sensations will gradually open upon him as his mind puts off its infirmities, and as, instead of being propelled restlessly towards others in admiration, or too hasty love, he makes it his prime business to understand himself. New sensations, I affirm, will be opened out, pure, and sanctioned by that reason which is their original author; and precious feelings of disinterested, that is, self-disregarding, joy and love may be regenerated and restored: and, in this sense, he may be said to measure back the track of life he has trod.

---

[1] Friend, No. 20. Jan. 4. 1810, p. 311.

"In such a disposition of mind let the youth return to the visible universe; and to conversation with ancient books; and to those, if such there be, which in the present day breathe the ancient spirit: and let him feed upon that beauty which unfolds itself, *not* to his eye as it sees carelessly the things which cannot possibly go unseen, and are remembered or not as accident shall decide; but to the thinking mind, which searches, discovers, and treasures up, — infusing by meditation into the objects with which it converses, an intellectual life, whereby they remain planted in the memory now and for ever. Hitherto the youth, I suppose, has been content, for the most part, to look at his own mind, after the manner in which he ranges along the stars in the firmament with naked unaided sight: let him now apply the telescope of art, to call the invisible stars out of their hiding places; and let him endeavour to look through the system of his being with the organ of reason; summoned to penetrate, as far as it has power, in discovery of the impelling forces and the governing laws.

"These expectations are not immoderate: they demand nothing more than the perception of a few plain truths; namely, that knowledge efficacious for the production of virtue is the ultimate end of all effort, the sole dispenser of complacency and repose. A perception also is implied of the inherent superiority of contemplation to action. 'THE FRIEND' does not in this contradict his own words, where he has said heretofore that 'doubtless it is nobler to act than to think.' In these words it was his purpose to censure that barren contemplation, which rests satisfied with itself in cases where the thoughts are of such quality that they may be, and ought to be, embodied in action. But he speaks now of the general superiority of thought to action, as preceding and governing all action that moves to salutary purposes; and, secondly, as leading to elevation, the absolute possession of the individual mind, and to a consistency or harmony of the being within itself, which no outward agency can reach to disturb or to impair; and, lastly, as producing works of pure science, or of the combined faculties of imagination, feeling, and reason; works which, both from their independence, in their origin, upon accident, their nature, their duration, and the wide spread of their influence, are entitled rightly to take place of the noblest and most beneficent deeds of heroes, statesmen, legislators, or warriors."

A brief reference is then made to secondary considerations, of a prudential nature, such as wealth, rank, and station, which are not to be treated with indifference and disdain, but which are to be regarded as auxiliaries and motives to exertion, but never as *principal* or *originating forces.* It is conceded also, that the present is, notwithstanding its manifold excellences "a degenerate age. Recreant knights are among us far outnumbering the true; and a false Gloriana imposes worthless services, which they who perform them know not to be such, and which are recompensed by rewards as worthless, yet eagerly grasped as if they were the immortal guerdon of virtue."

But it is also confidently asked, "into what errors could a young man fall, who had sincerely entered upon the course of moral discipline which has been now recommended, and to which the condition of youth is favourable?"

The effects of such moral discipline in detecting and disarming popular fallacies are further dwelt upon; and here the essay would be concluded, but from a desire of the writer to give full consideration to the advantages as alleged by "Mathetes" to be derived from a *living* instructor.

"I might here conclude, but my correspondent, towards the close of his letter, has written so feelingly upon the advantages to be derived, in his estimation, from a living instructor, that I must not leave this part of the subject without a word of direct notice.

'THE FRIEND' cited, some time ago, a passage from prose works of Milton, eloquently describing the m ner in which good and evil grow up together in t field of the world almost inseparably; and insisti consequently, upon the knowledge and survey of as necessary to the constituting of human virtue, a the scanning of error to the confirmation of truth. If this be so, and I have been reasoning to the sa effect in the preceding paragraph, the fact, and th thoughts which it may suggest, will, if rightly ap plied, tend to moderate an anxiety for the guidance of a more experienced or superior mind. The advantage where it is possessed is far from being an absolute good; nay, such a preceptor, ever at hand, might prove an oppression not to be thrown off, and a fatal hinderance.[1]

. . . . .

"These results, I contend, whatever may be the benefits derived from such an enlightened teacher, are in their degree inevitable. And by this process, humility and docile dispositions may exist towards the master, endued as he is with the power which personal presence confers; but at the same time they will be liable to overstep their due bounds, and to degenerate into passiveness and prostration of mind. This, towards him; while, with respect to other living men, nay, even to the mighty spirits of past times, there may be associated with such weakness a want of modesty and humility. Insensibly may steal in presumption, and a habit of sitting in judgment in cases where no sentiment ought to have existed but diffidence or veneration. Such virtues are the sacred attributes of youth; its appropriate calling is not to distinguish in the fear of being deceived or degraded, not to analyze with scrupulous minuteness, but to accumulate in genial confidence; its instinct, its safety, its benefit, its glory, is to love, to admire, to feel, and to labour. Nature has irrevocably decreed, that our prime dependence in all stages of life after infancy and childhood have been passed through (nor do I know that this latter ought to be excepted) must be upon our own minds; and the way to knowledge shall be long, difficult, winding, and oftentimes returning upon itself.

---

[1] Friend, No. 20., Jan. 4. 1810, p. 315.

"What has been said is a mere sketch, and that only of a part of this interesting country into which we have been led; but my correspondent will be able to enter the paths that have been pointed out. Should he do this, and advance steadily for awhile, he needs not fear any deviations from the truth which will be finally injurious to him. He will not long have his admiration fixed upon unworthy objects; he will neither be clogged nor drawn aside by the love of friends or kindred, betraying his understanding through his affections; he will neither be bowed down by conventional arrangements of manners producing too often a lifeless decency; nor will the rock of his spirit wear away in the endless beating of the waves of the world; neither will that portion of his own time, which he must surrender to labours by which his livelihood is to be earned, or his social duties performed, be unprofitable to himself indirectly, while it is directly useful to others; for that time has been primarily surrendered through an act of obedience to a moral law established by himself, and therefore he moves then also along the orbit of perfect liberty.

"Let it be remembered that the advice requested does not relate to the government of the more dangerous passions, or the fundamental principles of right and wrong as acknowledged by the universal conscience of mankind. I may, therefore, assure my youthful correspondent, if he will endeavour to look into himself in the manner which I have exhorted him to do, that in him the wish will be realised, to him in due time the prayer granted, which was uttered by that living teacher of whom he speaks with gratitude as of a benefactor, when, in his character of philosophical Poet, having thought of morality as implying in its essence voluntary obedience, and producing the effect of order, he transfers in the transport of imagination, the law of moral to physical natures, and, having contemplated, through the medium of that order, all modes of existence as subservient to one spirit, concludes his address to the power of Duty in the following words:[1]

'To humbler functions, awful Power!
I call thee; I myself commend
Unto thy guidance from this hour;
Oh, let my weakness have an end!
Give unto me, made lowly wise,
The spirit of self-sacrifice;
The confidence of Reason give;
And in the light of truth thy bondman let me live!'

M. M."[2]

Twenty years after this Essay was written, Mr. Wordsworth thus briefly adverted to the subject in a letter to Sir Wm. Hamilton of Dublin.

---

[1] Ode to Duty, vol. iv. p. 210.

[2] Such was the signature in the first edition of "The Friend," p. 317.

To Professor Hamilton, Observatory, Dublin.

"*Lowther Castle, Sept.* 26. 1830.

"My dear Mr. Hamilton,

. . . . . .

"A word on the serious part of your letter. Your views of action and contemplation are, I think, good. If you can lay your hands upon Mr. Coleridge's 'Friend' you will find some remarks of mine upon a letter signed, if I recollect right, 'Mathetes,' which was written by Professor Wilson, in which, if I am not mistaken, sentiments like yours are expressed. At all events, I am sure that I have long retained those opinions, and have frequently expressed them either by letter or otherwise. One thing, however, is not to be forgotten concerning active life—that a personal independence must be provided for; and in some cases more is required—ability to assist our friends, relations, and natural dependents. The party are at breakfast, and I must close.

"Ever faithfully yours,
"WILLIAM WORDSWORTH."

CHAPTER XXX.

ESSAY ON EPITAPHS.

In the twenty-fifth number of "The Friend," published Thursday, Feb. 22. 1810, appear two Epitaphs translated from Chiabrera, without the name of the translator. These are followed by a dissertation on sepulchral inscriptions, which was afterwards acknowledged by Mr. Wordsworth, as composed by himself, and republished by him as an "Essay on Epitaphs" among the notes to "The Excursion;"[1] and the translations are incorporated in his works.[2]

This Essay appears to have been occasioned by a perusal of the epitaphs of Chiabrera, which gave so much pleasure that it led him to examine that species of composition more closely, and to investigate the principles on which excellence in it is founded. He was further induced to engage in this inquiry by a study of Dr. Johnson's observations on the epitaphs[3] of Pope, and by a persuasion that the practice of the poet and the teaching of the critic, had a tendency to mislead the public in this matter.

---

[1] The Essay has also been reprinted as a preface to an original collection of Epitaphs replete with solemn sweetness and Christian comfort: Lyra Memorialis, by Joseph Snow. Lond. 1847.

[2] "Perhaps some needful service of the state," &c., vol. v. p.114. and "O thou who movest onward with a mind," vol. v. p. 115. See also ibid. 116—120.

[3] There is an "Essay on Epitaphs" by Dr. Johnson, in one of the early numbers of the Gentleman's Magazine; Mr. Wordsworth was not acquainted with this Essay when he wrote his own. He afterwards spoke of it with much commendation.

The invention of epitaphs may be ascribed, says Mr. Wordsworth, to a consciousness of a principle of immortality in the human soul. This is antecedent to the social affections, and gives strength to them. The contemplative soul, " travelling in the direction of man's mortality," and contemplating *that*, " advances to the region of everlasting life." And the author of this species of composition, epitaphs, stands at a middle point, between mortality and immortality. He looks *back* on the one, and *forward* to the other. Looking back with love on the mortal *body*, he guards the remains of the deceased, and erects a tomb; looking forward with hope to his immortal existence both in body and *soul*, he preserves his memory, and *writes an epitaph*. The author next adverts to the situations of *places* of interment. He displays the advantages derived from the association of burial-grounds with living objects of natural beauty,—rivers, trees, flowers, mountains, waterfalls, and fresh breezes; and also with way-sides, as in ancient times among the Greeks and Romans. These are in some degree compensated in large towns by the custom of depositing the dead in the neighbourhood of places of worship, which suggests many natural and solemn admonitions; and a village Churchyard combines many of the best tendencies of the ancient practice with those peculiar to a place of Christian worship. " The sensations of pious cheerfulness which attend the celebration of the sabbath-day in rural places are profitably chastised by the sight of the graves of kindred and friends gathered together in that general home, towards which the thoughtful but happy spectators themselves are journeying. Hence, a parish-church, in the stillness of the country, is a visible centre of a community of the living and the dead, a point which are habitually referred the nearest concer of both.[1]

"Amid the quiet of a churchyard thus decorat as it seemed by the hand of memory, and shining, I may so say, in the light of love, I have been affecte by sensations akin to those which have arisen in my mind, while I have been standing by the side of a smooth sea on a summer's day. It is such a happiness to have, in an unkind world, one enclosur where the voice of detraction is not heard; where the traces of evil inclination are unknown; where contentment prevails, and there is no jarring tone in the peaceful concert of amity and gratitude. I have been roused from this reverie by a consciousness, suddenly flashing upon me, of the anxieties, the perturbations, and, in many instances, the vices and rancorous dispositions, by which the hearts of those who lie under so smooth a surface and so fair an outside must have been agitated. The image of an unruffled sea has still remained; but my fancy has penetrated into the depths of that sea, with accompanying thoughts of shipwreck, of the destruction of the mariner's hopes, the bones of drowned men heaped together, monsters of the deep, and all the hideous and confused sights which Clarence saw in his dream.

"Nevertheless, I have been able to return (and who may not?) to a steady contemplation of the benign influence of such a favourable register lying open to the eyes of all. Without being so far lulled as to magine I saw in a village churchyard the eye, or entral point, of a rural Arcadia, I have felt that with ll the vague and general expressions of love, gratiude, and praise, with which it is usually crowded, it s a far more faithful representation of homely life as existing among a community in which circumstances have not been untoward, than any report which might be made by a rigorous observer deficient in that spirit of forbearance and those kindly prepossessions without which human life can in no condition be profitably looked at or described. For we must remember that it is the nature of *vice* to force itself upon notice both in the act and by its consequences. Drunkenness, cruelty, brutal manners, sensuality, and impiety, thoughtless prodigality, and idleness, are obstreperous while they are in the height and hey-day of their enjoyment, and, when that is passed away, long and obtrusive is the train of misery which they draw after them. But, on the contrary, the *virtues*, especially those of humble life, are retired, and many of the highest must be sought for or they will be overlooked. Industry, economy, temperance, and cleanliness, are indeed made obvious by flourishing fields, rosy complexions, and smiling countenances; but how few know anything of the trials to which men in a lowly condition are subject, or of the steady and triumphant manner in which those trials are often sustained, but they themselves! The afflictions which peasants and rural artizans have to struggle with are for the most part secret; the tears which they wipe away, and the sighs which they stifle, this is all a labour of privacy. In fact, their victories are to themselves known only imperfectly; for it is inseparable from virtue, in the pure sense of the word, to be unconscious of the might of her own prowess."

---

[1] The reader will here recollect the picture drawn by the hand of the Poet in "The Excursion," book vi., "The Churchyard among the Mountains."

From these considerations it is concluded in the Essay that "an epitaph ought to contain some thought or feeling belonging to the mortal or immortal part of our nature, touchingly expressed. . . . Hence, it will often happen in epitaphs that little is said which is *characteristic* of the person to whom the monument is erected. And this arises, not from the absence of peculiar traits in the person, but from the indisposition of survivors to '*analyze* the characters of those whom they *love.* The affections are their own justification.'"

Still an epitaph to be good ought not to deal only in generalities. The reader ought to know *who* the person was on whom he is called upon to think with interest. But "the writer of an epitaph is not to be an anatomist; he is not to describe the character of the deceased with laborious and antithetic discrimination, which argues little affection in the mourner, or little passion-stirring virtue in the dead. The character of a deceased friend is not seen, no, nor ought to be seen, otherwise than through a tender haze or luminous mist that spiritualizes and beautifies it. Such an epitaph is written by truth hallowed by love, the joint offspring of the worth of the dead, and the affections of the living.

An epitaph addresses itself to all, and therefore ought to be perspicuous and condescending, its story should be concise, its admonitions brief. The thoughts and feelings expressed in it should partake of its permanent character; they should be serious, decorous,
solemn. "A grave is a tranquillizing object;
ation springs up from it as naturally as the

wild flowers which besprinkle its turf." Consequently, all transports of passion should be banished from it.

Hence there is a natural truthfulness in these epitaphs where the dead speak, and give admonition to the living.

These observations refer specially to those whose memories *require* preservation by means of epitaphs. The great benefactors of mankind do not need such memorials. Their works speak for them.

> "What *needs* my Shakspeare for his honoured bones
> The labour of an age in piled stones? . . .
> Thou in our wonder and astonishment
> Hast built thyself a livelong monument."

Such is a brief outline of the "Essay on Epitaphs."

The reader of that Essay should be requested to bear in mind that it is only *one* of a series of papers on that subject. This Essay was printed in "The Friend," in the month of February; and in the March following "The Friend" ceased to appear. If its publication had been continued, it is certain that the subject would have been resumed and pursued further. Indeed, there still exist among Mr. Wordsworth's papers two other portions of the series, fairly transcribed with a view to publication in "The Friend."

In this sequel to the Essay, the author considers the question, whether it is to be deplored that epitaphs in general are written in an eulogistic style. "Where are the *bad* people buried?" is an inquiry which suggests itself to a reader of the inscription on the tomb in the churchyard.

"*No* epitaph," he thinks, "ought to be written on *a bad* man; except for a warning."

He then proceeds to examine how far what are called fantastic expressions, such as strong metaphors, allusions to the etymology or meaning of the name of the deceased, may or may not be regarded as speaking the genuine language of an impassioned mind. Next he turns to epitaphs composed in the style of Pope, with well-weighed phrase, pointed epigrams, &c., and elaborate antithesis, and shows how ill suited they are to the purpose they are designed to serve. He examines the epitaph by Lord Lyttleton on his wife; by Pope on Mrs. Corbet (pronounced by Johnson to be the best of that author); and Mason's epitaph at Bristol, "Take holy earth;" and also of Miss Drummond. The latter part of an epitaph by Gray is almost the only instance which the author of the Essay remembers, among the metrical epitaphs in our language of the last century, of affecting thoughts rising naturally, and keeping themselves pure from vicious diction. This is the epitaph on Mrs. Clark:

"Lo, where the silent marble weeps," &c.

He then returns to Chiabrera. "'An Epitaph,' says Weever[1], 'is a superscription (either in verse or prose), or an astrict pithy diagram, writ, carved, or engraven, upon the tomb, grave, or sepulchre of the defunct, briefly declaring (*and that with a kind of commiseration*) the name, the age, the deserts, the dignities, the state, *the praises both of body and mind*, the good and bad fortunes in the life, and the manner and time of the death of the person therein interred.' This account of an epitaph, which as far as it goes is just, was no doubt taken by Weever from the monuments of our own country; and it shows that, in his conception, an epitaph was not to be an abstract character of the deceased, but an epitomized biography blended with description, by which an impression of the character was to be conveyed. Bring forward the one incidental expression, 'a kind of commiseration;' unite with it a concern on the part of the dead for the well-being of the living, made known by exhortation and admonition; and let this commiseration and concern pervade and brood over the whole, so that what was peculiar to the individual shall still be subordinate to a sense of what he had in common with the species; and our notion of a perfect epitaph would then be realised; and it pleases me to say that this is the very model upon which those of Chiabrera are for the most part framed. Observe how exquisitely this is exemplified in the one beginning,

---

[1] Funeral Monuments, p. ix.

'Pause, courteous stranger! Balbi supplicates,'[1]

given in 'The Friend' some weeks ago. The subject of the epitaph is introduced entreating, not directly in his own person, but through the mouth of the author, that, according to the religious belief of his country, a prayer for his soul might be preferred to the Redeemer of the world. Placed in counterpoise with this right, which he had in common with all the dead, his individual earthly accomplishments appear light to his funereal biographer, as they did to the person of whom he speaks when alive; nor could Chiabrera have ventured to touch upon them but under the sanction of this previous acknowledgment. He then goes on to say how various and profound was his learning, and how deep a hold it took upon his affections, but that he weaned himself from these things as vanities, and was devoted in later life exclusively to the divine truths of the gospel as the only knowledge in which he could find perfect rest. Here we are thrown back upon the introductory supplication, and made to feel its especial propriety in this case. His life was long, and every part of it bore appropriate fruits. Urbino, his birth-place, might be proud of him, and the passenger who was entreated to pray for his soul has a wish breathed for his welfare. This composition is a perfect whole; there is nothing arbitrary or mechanical, but it is an organised body of which the members are bound together by a common life, and are all justly proportioned. If I had not gone so much into detail I should have given further instances of Chiabrera's epitaphs; but I must content myself with saying that if he had abstained from the introduction of heathen mythology, of which he is lavish—an inexcusable fault for an inhabitant of a Christian country, yet admitting of some palliation in an Italian who treads classic soil, and has before his eyes the ruins of the temples which were dedicated to those fictitious beings as objects of worship by the majestic people his ancestors,— that if he had abstained from this fault, had omitted also some uncharitable particulars, and had not on some occasions forgotten that truth is the soul of passion, he would have left his readers little to regret. I do not mean to say that higher and nobler thoughts may not be found in sepulchral inscriptions than his contain; but he understood his work; the principles upon which he composed are just. The reader of 'The Friend' has had proofs of this. One shall be given of his mixed manner of exemplifying some of the points in which he has erred:

---

[1] The translations from Chiabrera will be found in vol. v. p. 113—121 of Wordsworth's Poems.

'O Lælius, beauteous flower of gentleness,' &c.

This epitaph is not without some tender thoughts, but a comparison of it with the one upon the youthful Pozzobonelli will more clearly show that Chiabrera has here neglected to ascertain whether the passions expressed were in kind and degree a dispensation of reason, or at least commodities issued under her licence and authority.

" The epitaphs of Chiabrera are twenty-nine in number, all of them, save two, upon men probably little known at this day in their own country, and scarcely at all beyond the limits of it; and the reader is generally made acquainted with the moral and intellectual excellence which distinguished them by a brief history of the course of their lives, or a selection of events and circumstances, and thus they are individualised; but in the two other instances, namely, in those of Tasso and Raphael, he enters into no particulars, but contents himself with four lines expressing one sentiment, upon the principle laid down in the former part of this discourse, where the subject of an epitaph is a man of prime note.

" In an obscure corner of a country churchyard I once espied, half overgrown with hemlock and nettles, a very small stone laid upon the ground, and bearing nothing more than the name of the deceased, with the date of birth and death, importing that it was an infant which had been born one day and died the following. I know not how far the reader may be in sympathy with me, but more awful thoughts of rights conferred, of hopes awakened, of remembrances stealing away or vanishing, were imparted to my mind by that inscription there before my eyes than by any other that it has ever been my lot to meet with upon a tombstone."

Such is a concise analysis of the Dissertation on Epitaphs, as far as it was written: probably additions would have been made to it if "The Friend" had enjoyed a longer existence.

The portion which has been published received the following commendation from one of the best essay-writers in the English language. "Your Essay on Epitaphs," says Charles Lamb to Wordsworth, "is the only sensible thing which has been written on that subject, and it goes to the bottom."[1]

From these pages, the reader will turn with interest to the examples presented by the author in illustration of his own precepts. In addition to the epitaphs translated from Chiabrera he will peruse the original epitaphs and elegiac pieces among the poems of Wordsworth. The inscription on the grave of his own child in Grasmere churchyard[2], that on the cenotaph of Mrs. Fermor, at Coleorton[3], that on the tombstone of the Rev. Owen Lloyd, in Langdale chapel-yard[4], and of Mr. Southey, in Crosthwaite church[5], will show the value of his principles and how successfully he applied them. These epitaphs possess the happy faculty of interesting the reader in the persons whom they commemorate, and of making him sympathise with them, while they suggest topics of endearing consolation drawn from the invisible world, and thus purify the affections and elevate the thoughts. They show how instructive a *churchyard* may be; how the interests of this life may be interwoven with those of another; how heavenly affections may chasten the joys and cheer the sorrows of earth; and how the sorrows of earth may minister occasion for the exercise of faith, and hope, and joy, and raise the soul to heaven.

---

[1] Talfourd's Final Memorials of Charles Lamb, vol. i. p. 180. Wordsworth's Elegy on Charles Lamb, vol. v. p. 141., written A.D. 1835, was originally designed as an epitaph, as the first lines show. It affords an instance of a playful allusion to the name of the person commemorated, an allusion in accordance with the principles previously stated in the MS. sequel of the Essay.

[2] Vol. v. p. 121. [3] Vol. v. p. 122. [4] Vol. v. p. 123.

[5] Vol. v. p. 147. The first six lines of an epitaph in Grasmere Church were also his composition. The elegant marble tablet on which they are engraved was designed by Sir Francis Chantrey, and prepared by Allan Cunningham, 1822. It is over the chancel door.

CHAPTER XXXI.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SCENERY OF THE LAKES.—SONNETS AND LETTERS ON THE PROJECTED WINDERMERE RAILWAY.

In the year 1810, appeared a folio volume, entitled "Select Views in Cumberland, Westmoreland, and Lancashire," by the Rev. Joseph Wilkinson, Rector of East and West Wrotham, Norfolk. It was published at London; and contains forty-eight sketches of the Lake Scenery.

Prefixed to these Views is an Introduction, containing thirty-four pages, and two sections of twelve pages, giving some practical directions for visiting the Lakes.

The whole of this letter-press was supplied by Mr. Wordsworth, and was afterwards printed with his name, in his volume of Sonnets on the River Duddon, and subsequently as a separate publication; the fifth edition of which, with considerable additions, appeared at Kendal in 1835.

Previously to the present century, the beauties of the Lake-District had attracted little public attention. Indeed, except in the works of Thomson and Dyer, few traces are to be found of a just taste for natural beauty in the last century. Bishop Burnet, in his Tour, speaks only of the *horror* of the Alps.[1] Even

---

[1] See two letters to the Morning Post, Dec. 1844, by Mr. Wordsworth.

John Evelyn appears to shudder at them. Even Goldsmith never dreamed of any such thing as beauty in them. Dr. Brown, the author of the "Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times," a native of Cumberland, was one of the first who "led the way to a worthy admiration of this country," in a letter to a friend, in which the attractions of the Vale of Keswick were delineated with a powerful pencil and the feelings of a genuine enthusiast.

The Poet Gray had traversed it, in a journey from Penrith to Lancaster, in October, 1767; and his brief sketch of what he then saw has never been surpassed in delicacy of perception and fidelity of delineation[1]; and it well deserves to find a place in modern Guide Books to the Lakes. But he spent only ten days in exploring this region, and this at a time when roads were bad, and at a season when days are short; and his description is necessarily very partial, as his means of observation were very limited.

A more elaborate work was produced by the Rev. Mr. West, a Roman Catholic clergyman, who was born in Wales in 1717, resided at Furness and Ulverston, died in 1779, and was buried in Kendal Church. His "Guide to the Lakes" takes the lead of that class of publications, which are now very numerous. A considerable portion of Mr. West's "Guide" is incorporated in the two thick octavo volumes, entitled "The Tourist's New Guide, containing a description of the Lakes," &c., by William Green, which was published at Kendal, in 1818, and is a very rich store-house of minute and accurate information concerning this region.[1]

---

[1] See his letter to Dr. Wharton, dated Oct. 18. 1769, vol. i. p. 447. edit. 4to. Lond. 1814.

But it was reserved to Mr. Wordsworth to set the example of treating the Lake Scenery in a manner not unworthy of its beauty and magnificence; and for this he was well qualified, not only by natural endowments, and by his poetical functions, but also by familiarity with these scenes, even from his infancy, and by a careful study of their changeful forms and colours in every season of the year. He commences his work with directions to the tourist, and informs him how he may approach the Lake-District with the greatest advantage. He supplies him with various information concerning the routes to be followed for visiting the most interesting objects in the most profitable manner. And having furnished him with this preliminary knowledge, he advances a step further. He proceeds to present a panoramic view of the Lake District. He invites the reader to accompany him to some central eminence, or, rather, imagines him placed on "a cloud hanging midway between Great Gavel and Scawfell." He points out to him the valleys which diverge from this centre as spokes from the nave of a wheel, and aids him to trace in imagination the course of these radiating valleys, and of the brooks which flow along them to their termination: Langdale, to the south-east; the vale of Coniston, on the south; the vale of Duddon, with its copious stream, on the south-west. Eskdale, watered by the Esk, adorned with the woody steep of Muncaster, the deep valley of Wastdale, and its stern and desolate lake on the west, and beyond it the Irish Sea; Ennerdale with its wild lake, and its stream flowing through fertile meadows by Egremont Castle, the vale and village of Buttermere, and Crummock Water, then present themselves. Beyond, is the beautiful vale of Lorton, along which the river Cocker flows, till it falls into the Derwent, below the ruins of the castle and the town of Cockermouth, the author's native place. Lastly, Borrowdale, of which the vale of Keswick is only a continuation, stretches due north. Thus half of the circle has been completed. The rest is traced in a similar manner.

---

[1] There is a "Survey of the Lakes" in folio, by James Clarke, Land Surveyor, Lond. 2d edit. 1789, which contains much that is valuable and interesting, with respect to antiquities, natural produce, family history, &c., but has little reference to picturesque scenery.

The various beauties produced by light and shadow in this mountainous region are briefly indicated: "I do not know," says the writer, "any tract of country in which within so narrow a compass may be found an equal variety in the influence of light and shadow upon the sublime or beautiful features of the landscape."

The different *constituents* of beauty are then enumerated: first, the Mountains, and the influence of various agencies on their surface, for the modification of their form, and diversification of their colour, according to the changes of season and atmosphere. The iron with which they are impregnated, the herbage, the mosses, lichens, ferns, and woods, all contribute to give variety and brilliance to their hues. Winter in this region has its peculiar grace and glory, which are accurately and vividly portrayed. A special characteristic of the Vales of the Lake-District is then noticed. The bed of these Valleys is often level, giving room for meadows in which picturesque rocks emerge like islands from the plain. The form of a *Lake*, it is remarked, is then most perfect, when it least resembles a *river;* and when, consequently, it inspires that placid feeling of repose, which particularly belongs to a lake as distinguished from a flowing stream, and as reflecting the clouds and all the imagery of the sky and of the surrounding rocks and woods. A comparison is then drawn between the English lakes and the larger sea-like lakes of Scotland, Switzerland, and America; and the peculiar source of beauty in those of *England* is very happily pointed out. The Islands which arise from the surface of some of the lakes are then noticed; and the feelings are described which are impressed on the mind by the treeless and gloomy Tarns in the stern solitude of the mountains, and often overshadowed by steep precipices, and with huge masses of rock scattered around them. Next the clear brooks, and after them the rich variety of forest trees and coppice woods, contribute a large share to the beauty of the scenery. This part of the volume is concluded with observations on the influence of climate and of atmospheric changes on the natural beauties of the country. These remarks deserve a careful perusal, and will be read with much gratification.

The next section is occupied with an inquiry, how far the beauties of this country are ascribable to the hand of man. The Lake-District in ancient times was probably almost impervious, by reason of vast forests, as well as from the absence of avenues of communication through the mountain fastnesses. Hence few remains of ancient grandeur, castles, or monasteries, are to be found, except in the outskirts of this region. Chapels, daughters of some distant mother-church, were at first erected in the more open and fertile vales, as those of Bowness and Grasmere, dependents of Kendal, which in their turn became mother-churches to smaller chapels. Dalesmen, living here and there, erect crofts and homesteads, till the valley is visibly partitioned by walls built of the rude rocky materials which the soil supplies, and which readily harbour mould in their interstices, and being continually refreshed with showers, produce never-fading hanging gardens, of ferns, mosses, and wild flowers.

When the Border-country was pacified by the union of the two crowns, property became more secure, dwellings were multiplied, and agriculture improved. A small republic of independent dalesmen and their households, spinning their own wool in their own houses for clothing, and supporting themselves by the produce of their lands and flocks, formed itself around some small place of worship, adorned at one end with a steeple-tower or a small belfry, in which one or two bells hung visibly, as Wytheburn's "modest house of prayer," mentioned in the "Waggoner."

The native forests were thinned for firewood and for the supply of fuel to furnaces, and to give place to corn and cattle. The native rock affords excellent materials for building cottages, which, from their rudeness and simplicity, appear to have risen by a spontaneous growth from the soil. Herein consists their beauty. Their projecting masses of stone produce beautiful effects of light and shade. Their solid porches built to weather-fend the stranger, and to guard the cottage hall from wind and rain, add much to their picturesque appearance; as do the chimneys, overlaid with slate on four small pillars to prevent the wind from driving down the smoke; and the thick rough and jagged grey slates which form the roof, and nourish lichens and flowers in the intervals between them. Hence the works of Art are assimilated to those of Nature, and grow gradually into harmonious oneness with them and each other, and all partake of a feeling of tranquil unity, and appear "to be received into the bosom of the living principle of things."

The author then passes to a less agreeable, but not less important, part of his subject. He reverts to the time, about the middle of the last century, when the scenery of the lakes was, as it were, unveiled from the retirement in which it had remained concealed till that time. A love of the picturesque led strangers to fix their abode in this region. But their affection was not always judicious. They expended large sums of money in banishing Nature from her own domain, and in engrafting grotesque and fantastic extravagances, or lavishing luxurious embellishments upon her, which marred her beauty, and disturbed her repose. Some examples of this vicious taste and its noxious effects are referred to. A rule is then suggested for future adoption. "Work where you can in the spirit of Nature, with an invisible hand of Art. . . . Houses in a mountainous region should be not obvious, or obtrusive, but retired. The colour of a house ought, if possible, to have a cast or shade of the colour of the soil. . . . Look at the rocks, and they will furnish a safe direction." There are some exceptions to this rule, which are noticed.

If houses are *white*, they ought to be embowered in trees. White houses, scattered over a valley, divide the surface into rectilinear figures, haunting the eye, and disturbing the repose of the scene. A cold slaty colour is also objectionable; so is a flaring yellow. On the whole, "the safest colour for general use," observes the author, "is something between a cream and a dust colour. It is best that the colouring should be *mixed* with the rough-cast, and not laid on as a wash afterwards." This is the colour of Rydal Mount.

These observations on houses are followed by suggestions on planting; and here the same rule is applied, which is, to consult Nature, and follow her guidance, and aid and encourage her operations, with due subordination to the primary principles of beauty and utility.

The author concludes with the following appeal: "It is probable, that in a few years the country on the margin of the lakes will fall almost entirely into the possession of gentry, either strangers or natives. It is then much to be wished that a better taste should prevail among these new proprietors; and, as they cannot be expected to leave things to themselves, that skill and knowledge should prevent unnecessary deviations from that path of simplicity and beauty along which, without design and unconsciously, their humble predecessors have moved. In this wish the author will be joined by persons of pure taste throughout the whole island, who, by their visits (often repeated) to the lakes in the north of England, testify that they deem the district a sort of national property, in which every man has a right and interest, who has an eye to perceive, and a heart to enjoy."[1]

---

[1] Description, &c., p. 87.

These observations of Mr. Wordsworth des more attention now that the Lake-District has b made more accessible by the extension of rail communication, almost from the banks of the Tha to the margin of Windermere. Ambleside is n within four hours of Manchester and Liverpool, a twelve of London. If great changes in the charac and amount of its population took place in the la fifty years, how much greater will occur in the ne half century! If, then, the Lake-District is to preser its charms, it can only be by the diffusion of soun principles of taste. It must be treated with a modes spirit of reverent affection. Self-forgetfulness, self-denial, and self-sacrifice, are requisite ingredients in a right appreciation of natural beauty; and all obtrusive exhibitions of personal importance in such a region as this are evidences of a barbarous and vicious taste; they are offences against the dignity of Nature, and are outrages against the rights of society.

On these grounds Mr. Wordsworth's cautions and suggestions impart to his "Descriptive Manual" a peculiar value which does not belong to any other *vade-mecum* of the Lakes. More recent itineraries may be more serviceable to the tourist in respect to local details of a fluctuating character; but this Manual has a permanent worth. Indeed, time will enhance its value. Doubtless, it has already defended this beautiful country from many desecrations; and in proportion as it is more studied, and its spirit more generally embodied in practice, so will this region be better guarded from violation. It is therefore much to be desired that it should be known to be what it really is, not a mere guide-book for a wayfaring man, seeking directions on a road, and accommodations at n inn, but a Manual of sound philosophical princi-les, teaching how Nature is to be contemplated, and ow her graces are to be preserved, cherished, and mproved.

The present appears to be a fit occasion for referring to two Sonnets[1], and also to two Letters, on the projected Kendal and Windermere railway: the latter were addressed by Mr. Wordsworth to the "Morning Post" at the close of 1844.

Two things must be borne in mind, in connexion with this subject; first, that Mr. Wordsworth's observations were not directed "against railways, but against their *abuses*." Indeed, he had celebrated the triumph of steam applied to locomotion in a sonnet, published in 1837[2]:

> "Nature doth embrace
> Her lawful offspring in man's art, and Time,
> Pleased with your triumphs o'er his brother Space,
> Accepts from your bold hands the proffered crown
> Of Hope, and smiles on you with cheer sublime."

Next, his remarks concern, in a great degree, what was *proposed* to be done by the railway projectors; and what has actually been effected by them falls far short of the original proposal. The railway terminus is now at Birthwaite, four miles south of Ambleside, but the scheme as first announced was to carry the railway to Lowwood. It was anticipated that it would be extended to Ambleside, and along

---

[1] "Is then no nook of English ground secure
From rash assault?"*
"Proud were ye, Mountains."†

[2] Motions and Means, vol. iv. p. 171.

---

* Vol. ii. p. 319. † Vol. ii. p. 320.

the fells above Rydal and Grasmere to Keswick, and thence to Cockermouth, and an act of parliament was obtained for that purpose.

Writing to one of his nephews in 1845, he thus speaks: "What do you think of a railway being driven, as it now is, close to the magnificent memorial of the piety of our ancestors? (Furness Abbey). We have also surveyors at work with our beautiful valley; the line meditated is to pass *through Rydal Park, and immediately behind Rydal Mount.*"

Let the reader of Mr. Wordsworth's letters realise these circumstances; let him suppose a Kendal and Keswick railway actually completed; let him picture to himself the havoc thus made among the native rocks and vales, scarified and ploughed up by it; let him imagine the din and smoke of engines and trains rushing to and fro through this quiet and romantic scenery; and then, but not till then, will he have a just notion of the feelings with which Mr. Wordsworth wrote his two sonnets and dictated his two letters on the projected railway.

Speaking of an intention, announced by certain projectors, to carry a railway through Furness Abbey[1], he adds, "Sacred as *that* relic of the devotion of our ancestors deserves to be kept, there are temples of Nature, *temples* built by the Almighty, which have a still higher claim to be left unviolated." If I may be allowed the expression, it was as a priest of this *natural* temple, that the Poet came forward, and stood, as it were, at the threshold and deprecated an invasion of the sanctuary.

Doubtless much may be alleged in behalf of any designs which facilitate an *approach* to these beautiful scenes. But an *approach* to them is a very different thing from an *incursion* into them. Such an aggression would greatly impair the beauty for which they are *approached;* and the proposed undertaking, looked at in its relation to the rational enjoyment and intellectual improvement of society by the education and refinement of its tastes and feelings, would have almost frustrated its own purpose. In this respect, not in any other, it can hardly be regretted by the lover of Nature and the philanthropist, that Mr. Wordsworth's predictions have been verified, and that the Kendal and Windermere railway has not proved a lucrative speculation. And a hope may, therefore, be cherished that the beautiful scenery of the Lakes will not be disfigured and desecrated by those rude and violent assaults, against which the aged Poet of the Lakes felt it his duty to protest, not so much on his own account as in the name of Nature, and on behalf of future generations.

---

[1] The Furness Railway passes close to it.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

London:
Spottiswoodes and Shaw,
New-street-Square.

GENERAL BOOKBINDING CO.
78 446ST 53 005 A IV AOH. 6080
QUALITY CONTROL MARK

Stanford University Libraries
3 6105 005 390 625

821.6
W923w
v. 1

STANFORD UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
CECIL H. GREEN LIBRARY
STANFORD, CALIFORNIA 94305-6004
(415) 723-1493

All books may be recalled after 7 days

DATE DUE

28D MAY 24 1994
MAY 14 1994
JUN 30 2001
JUN 2[illegible] 2002
APR 03 2003
JAN 06 2003
JUN 23 2003
OCT 04 2003